ALL NEW STAN LEE AND JACK KIRBY

THE SILVER SURFER

THE ULTIMATE COSMIC EXPERIENCE!

Also by Stan Lee

Origins of Marvel Comics
Son of Origins of Marvel Comics
Bring on the Bad Guys
Superhero Women
How to Draw Comics the Marvel Way
(with John Buscema)
The Coming of the Incredible Hulk
Greatest Battles of Marvel Superheroes

THE SILVER SURFER

by
Stan Lee
and
Jack Kirby

Simon and Schuster • New York

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Dedication

To every man, woman, or child who has ever scanned the far horizon and searched the distant stars, wondering what lies beyond.

Preface

Well, we finally did it!

After all these years, Jolly Jack and I actually managed to complete the one book we've always been threatening to foist upon a stunned and startled public.

Y'know, it's a funny thing. The two of us have created a whole kaboodle of superheroes and supervillains during our many years of collaboration at the good ol' Marvel bullpen; and yet, the Silver Surfer seems to have a special meaning to us both—a special significance, which goes beyond the normal fascination for a bigger-than-life cosmic-powered character.

Perhaps it's the symbolism bit. Ever since his first appearance in the *Fantastic Four* issue of March 1965, he seems to have symbolized more than just a high-flying hero who got his kicks by battling bad guys. We've received countless letters from readers in all parts of the country—all parts of the world—commenting upon the Surfer's gestalt, comparing him to everyone from Ulysses to Gandhi, and likening his suffering to a pictorial depiction of the agonies of the early religious martyrs.

Well, I won't deny that such descriptions and comparisons absolutely delighted me. Ever since I first saw our gleaming sky-rider, when Jack placed the initial drawing upon my desk, I felt that he had to represent more than the typical comicbook hero. Somehow or other, King Kirby had imbued this new, unique, totally arresting fictional figure with a spiritual quality, a sense of nobility, a feeling of almost religious fervor in his attitude and his demeanor. As I studied that first drawing, and the ones that soon followed, I immediately realized that there was something very special about this solitary figure upon the high-flying spaceboard—something seemingly mystical, and totally compelling. I knew I couldn't give him the sort of dialogue I'd write for any other colorful supporting character in one of our fanciful little epics. No, the Surfer would have to receive very special attention, very special treatment. It was one of those

rare cases where the character himself actually seems to determine how his creators will depict him.

What I mean is—you can't take a fella who looks like purity personified and have him say something like "I think I'll see if the other dudes wanna latch on to a few chicks tonight." You can't take a character who looks like the epitome of moral virtue and treat him like a neighborhood barfly. Nope! As soon as I first set eyes on the Silver Surfer I knew there was no way he could just be depicted like a silvery showoff on a souped-up surfboard! Where I had given Thor, God of Thunder, his own quasi-biblical/Shakespearean manner of speech, and Dr. Strange a sort of flowery, archaic/mystical type of dialogue, I knew that the Surfer would have to have his own distinctive style of speaking—naive, trusting, otherworldly, and tinged with sadness—sadness for the misery and misunderstanding he found throughout the planet Earth.

But, it just occurs to me that I may be compounding the confusion for those of you who know not how our comicbook sagas are cannily crafted in the hallowed halls of Marvel Comics. You may be saying to yourself "What's Stan talking about? What does he mean he knew he'd have to give the Surfer special dialogue? Didn't he write him into the script to begin with?" So, in order to banish any possible bewilderment on your part, let me backtrack just a bit and explain the way Jack and I had collaborated for lo those many moons.

Normally, in days of yore, an artist and writer had a very simple method of producing a comicbook epic. The writer would simply type the script and then hand it to the artist. Upon receiving the complete script, with panel descriptions and dialogue all spelled out, the artist merely followed the writer's written instructions and rendered the illustrations, much in the manner of a director structuring a stage play after receiving the author's manuscript. Yes, that was the way it used to be done. But, in the late 1950's, while collaborating on a myriad of fantasy tales, before the dawning of Marvel Comics, Jack and I had evolved another system of working, one which proved far more satisfying to us.

Since my cigar-smoking colleague has always had the greatest creativity, the greatest imagination, and the greatest visual story sense that one could hope for, I realized that there was really no need for me to labor over a fully developed script if Jack was to be the illustrator. All that

was necessary was to discuss the basic plot with him, turn him loose, and wait until he brought me the penciled drawings. And that's what we did. Jack and I would discuss the high points of whatever story we intended to create, and then he'd trot off to his ivy-covered little inglenook to complete the drawings while I'd occupy myself with other bits of mischief elsewhere till he returned with the drawings done.

Once I received the penciled pages, it was then my task to write the dialogue and captions, giving the story the proper rhythmic mood and establishing the necessary characterization. In order not to leave you hanging in midstream, if you'll forgive the mangled metaphor, after writing the copy I'd give the pages to a letterer, who'd then letter all the captions and balloons in the areas I had indicated. Next, the pages would be taken by the inker, who would—you guessed it!—go over the penciler's drawings with pen or brush, applying black india ink to all the indicated areas. At this point the artwork would be returned to me for final editing and, once the colorist had applied the proper colors to photostats of each and every page, the completed strip would be ready to be sent to the engraver—and what happened then I never knew and would never dare inquire!

So there you have it. My own laudable though long-winded explanation of why I found it necessary to determine the manner of writing the Silver Surfer's dialogue when first I saw him, more than a decade ago.

But what about today? I seem to sense the more curious amongst you wondering aloud how this very book itself came to be written. Since you've been so subtly prepared by the foregoing explanation, surely 'twill be no shock to you to learn that this very story was produced in the selfsame manner. Ever eager for a trip out west, I bravely journeyed to Jack's idyllic aerie high in the hills of southern California. There, during a fateful visit while I waxed envious over the sunny weather and the sensational view, we hammered out the main elements of the phantasmagoric parable soon to unfold before your bedazzled eyes. Then, I took my leave and returned to the real world, where I waited with bated breath until, months later, the penciled pages finally arrived. And then, the whole process began again.

For days on end I studied the artwork, thrilled by the variety, the depth, and the quiet power of Jack's drawings. I tried to absorb and digest the various nuances and implications of each individual scene and

sequence. And then, finally, the moment of truth arrived. The fun part was over. Now I had to write the thing!

Well, I won't bore you with the dreary details of the time spent determining how to set the mood, how to set the tone, how to provide the proper pacing, which elements to stress and which to subdue, where to insert lengthy bits of copy and where to let the pictures do the talking. Suffice it to say that it was a labor of love, and it was finally accomplished.

Now, all that has gone before is but prelude to this particular moment. Jack and I have done our part; the rest is up to you.

So join us now in the rapturous realm of fantasy, where the limits of time and space are bounded only by the shackles of your own imagination. The yawning, unending cosmos beckons, and—somewhere out there, beyond the farthest star—the Silver Surfer soars!

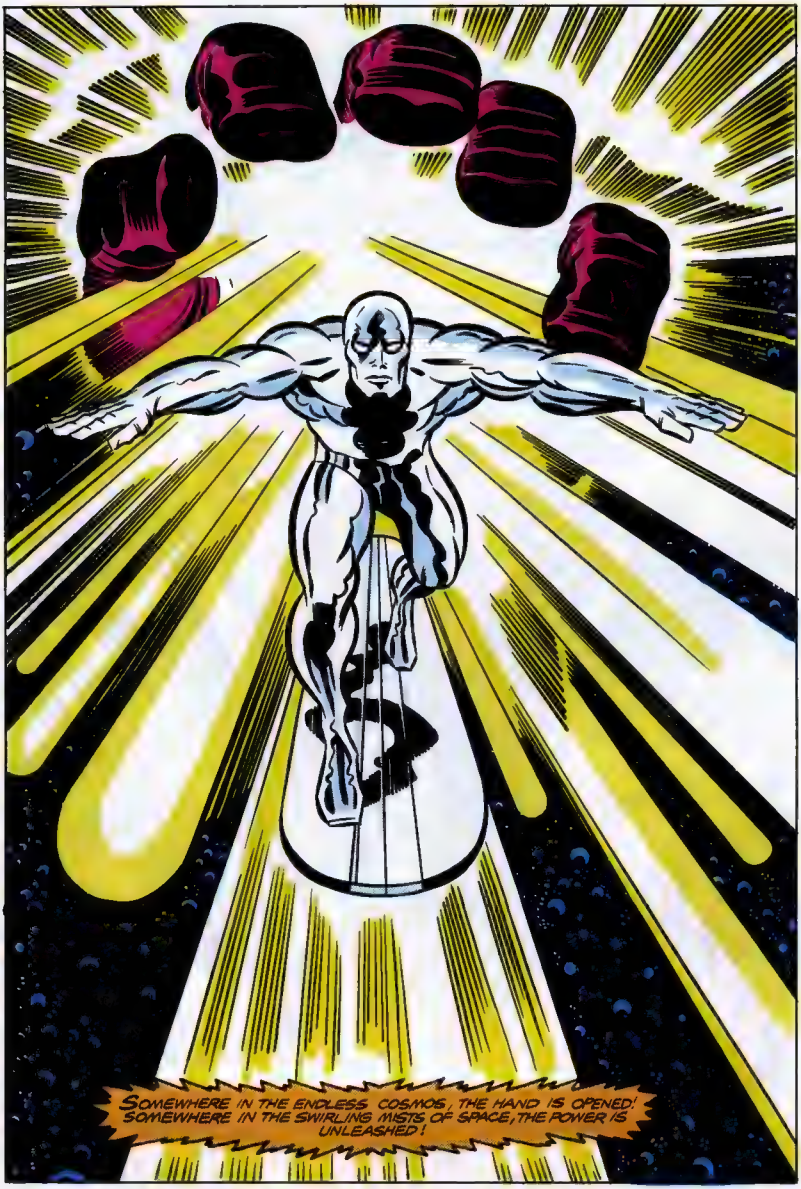
Excelsior!

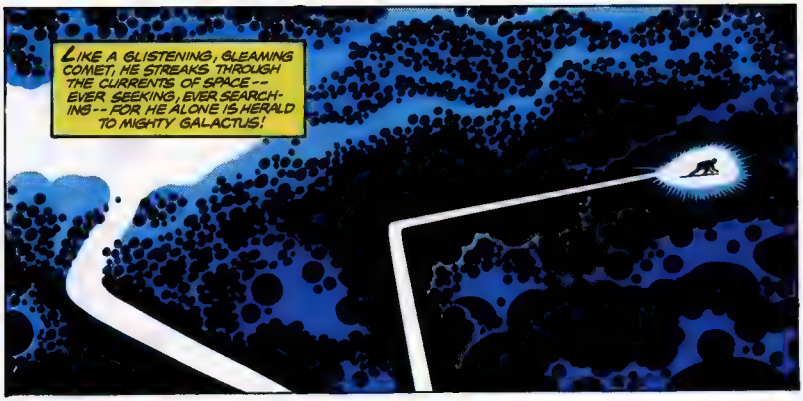
Stan Lee
New York 1978

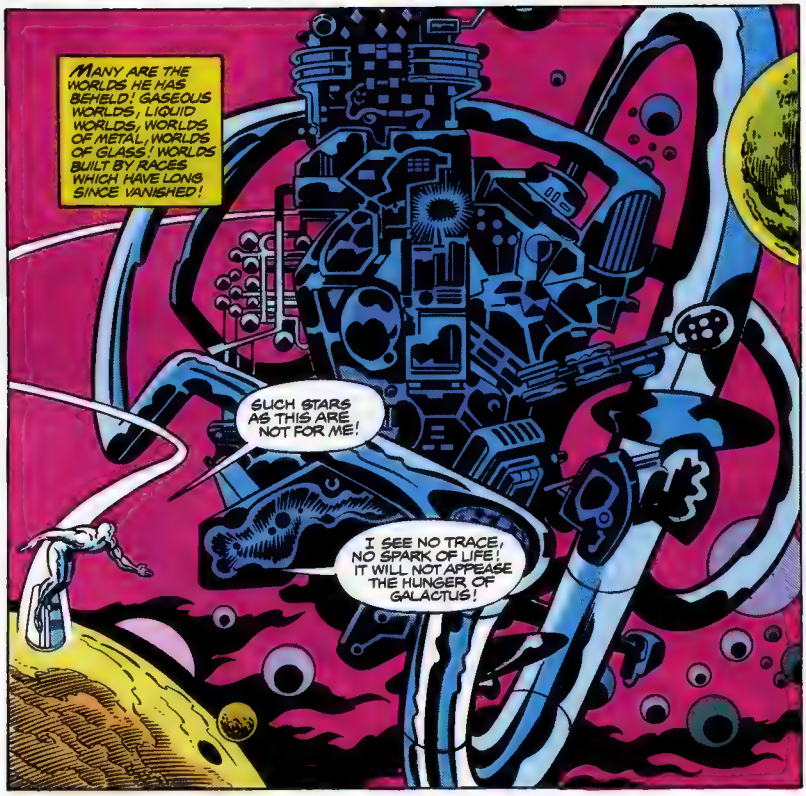
There was a Door to which I found no Key;
There was a Veil past which I could not see;
Some little Talk awhile of Me and Thee
There seemed—and then no more of Thee and Me.

Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám

THE SILVER SURFER
STAN LEE and JACK KIRBY
BEHOLD! THE HAND OF GALACTUS! BEHOLD! THE HAND OF HIM WHO IS LIKE UNTO A GOD! BEHOLD! THE CLUTCH OF HARNESSED POWER-- ABOUT TO BE RELEASED!

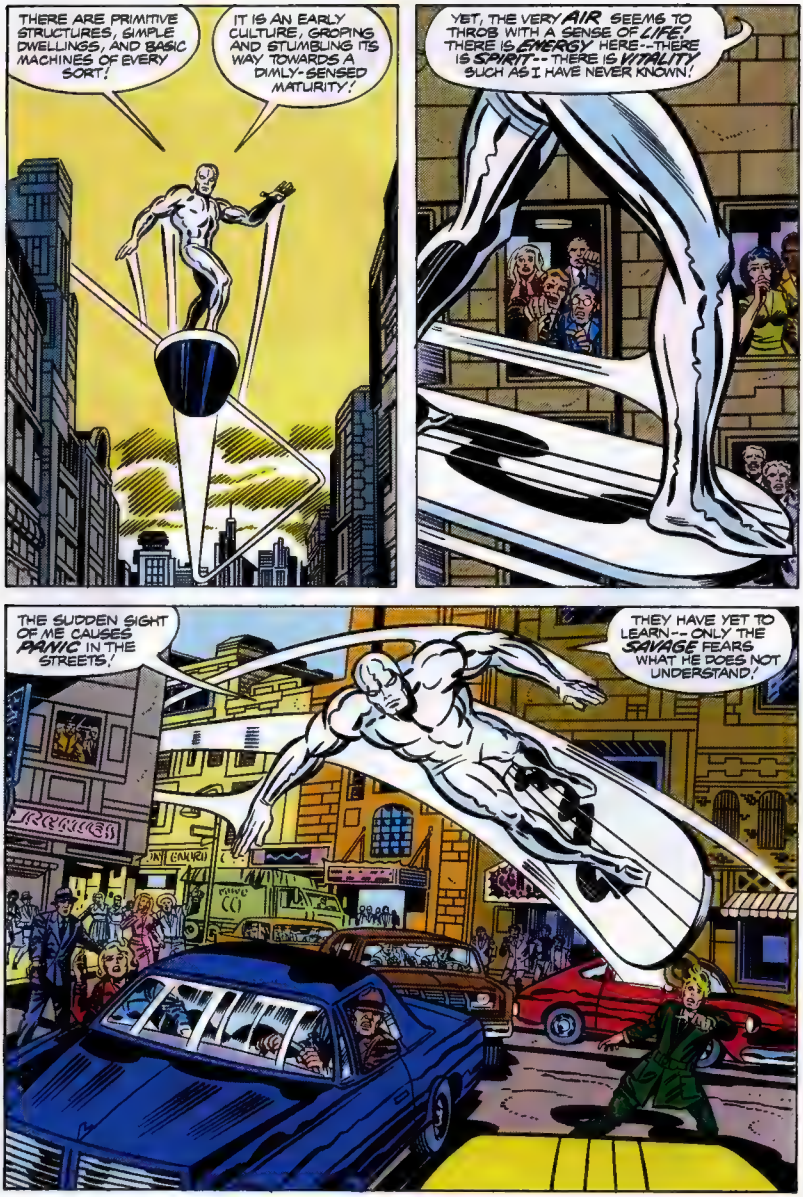

SOMEWHERE IN THE ENDLESS COSMOS, THE HAND IS OPENED!
SOMEWHERE IN THE SWIRLING MISTS OF SPACE, THE POWER IS UNLEASHED!


LIKE A GLISTENING, GLEAMING COMET, HE STREAKS THROUGH THE CURRENTS OF SPACE -- EVER SEEKING, EVER SEARCHING -- FOR HE ALONE IS HERALD TO MIGHTY GALACTUS!

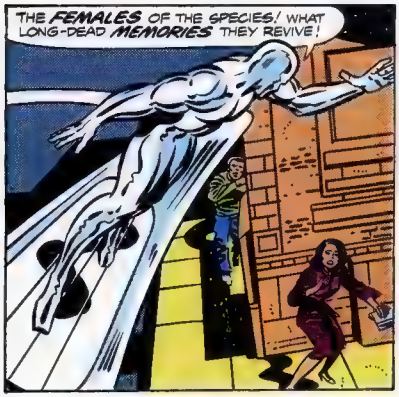

MANY ARE THE WORLDS HE HAS BEHELD! GASEOUS WORLDS, LIQUID WORLDS, WORLDS OF METAL, WORLDS OF GLASS! WORLDS BUILT BY RACES WHICH HAVE LONG SINCE VANISHED!
SUCH STARS AS THIS ARE NOT FOR ME!
I SEE NO TRACE, NO SPARK OF LIFE! IT WILL NOT APPEASE THE HUNGER OF GALACTUS!

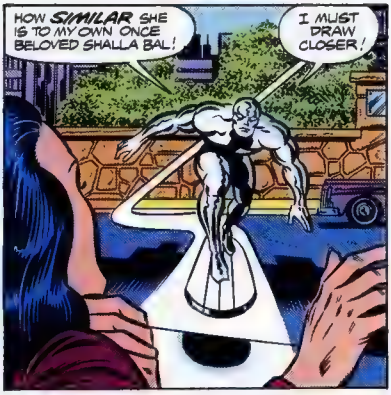
HOW VAST IS THE UNIVERSE! HOW LIMITLESS THE COSMOS!
EVEN I, WHO HAVE JOURNEYED BEYOND THE FARTHEST REACH OF THOUGHT, HAVE SEEN BUT A DROPLET OF THE ROLLING SEA OF SPACE!
AND THE MORE I BEHOLD, THE MORE DO I WONDER!
ALL LIFE IS A MYSTERY, BUT WHERE RESTS THE KEY?
SURELY ONE FATEFUL WORLD-- WAIT! WHAT HAVE I FOUND?
BENEATH ME SPINS A VERDANT SPHERE LIKE NONE I'VE EVER SEEN!
SO GREEN, SO LUSH-- BOTH WARM AND COOL, BOTH WET AND DRY!
HOW LIKE A PARADISE IT SEEMS! HOW LIKE MY OWN BELOVED ZENN-LA--WHICH IS LOST TO ME FOREVER!

BUT I MUST NOT THINK UPON ZENN-LA! I MUST NOT RECALL THE ONCE-AND-FORMER LIFE WHICH CAN NEVER AGAIN BE MINE!
THE CHOICE WAS MADE! THE DEED IS DONE! THE PAST IS DEAD--AS DEAD AS THE MAN WHOM ONCE I WAS--BEFORE I VOWED TO SERVE--GALACTUS!
NOW, ONLY MY MISSION REMAINS! THE HERALD MUST EVER SERVE THE MASTER!
YET, NEVER BEFORE HAVE I FELT SUCH STIRRING WITHIN MY BREAST! NEVER SUCH EAGERNESS, SUCH ELATION! WHAT MANNER OF WORLD HAVE I HERE FOUND?!!


THERE ARE PRIMITIVE STRUCTURES, SIMPLE DWELLINGS, AND BASIC MACHINES OF EVERY SORT!
IT IS AN EARLY CULTURE, GROPING AND STUMBLING ITS WAY TOWARDS A DIMLY-SENSED MATURITY!
YET, THE VERY AIR SEEMS TO THROB WITH A SENSE OF LIFE! THERE IS ENERGY HERE--THERE IS SPIRIT--THERE IS VITALITY SUCH AS I HAVE NEVER KNOWN!
THE SUDDEN SIGHT OF ME CAUSES PANIC IN THE STREETS!
THEY HAVE YET TO LEARN--ONLY THE SAVAGE FEARS WHAT HE DOES NOT UNDERSTAND!

WHAT CAN HAVE HAPPENED IN THEIR RACIAL PAST TO MAKE THEM SO APPREHENSIVE?
WHY ARE THEIR EYES SO FILLED WITH NAKED SHOCK AND MOUNTING TERROR?
DID THEY THINK THEMSELVES ALONE IN THE UNIVERSE?
DID THEY BELIEVE THEY WERE THE ONLY FORM OF SENTIENT LIFE?
STRANGE HOW IT IS ALWAYS THE YOUNG WHO ARE FIRST TO ACCEPT--AND TO TRUST!


THE FEMALES OF THE SPECIES! WHAT LONG-DEAD MEMORIES THEY REVIVE!


HOW SIMILAR SHE IS TO MY OWN ONCE BELOVED SHALLA BAL!
I MUST DRAW CLOSER!

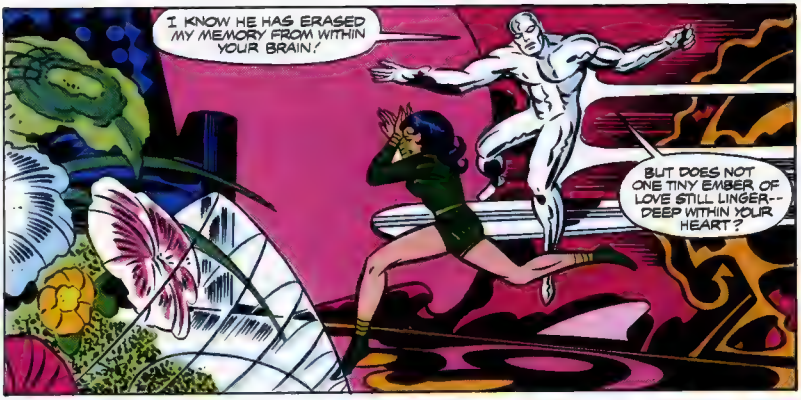
DO NOT FEAR! I MEAN YOU NO HARM!

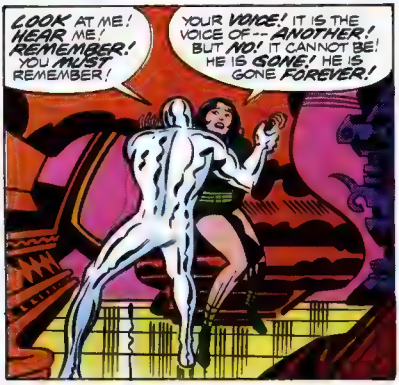
HER EYES FILL WITH TERROR! MY WORDS ARE BUT GIBBERISH TO HER!

WHY DO YOU SCREAM, SHALLA BAL? DO YOU NOT KNOW ME, BELOVED?

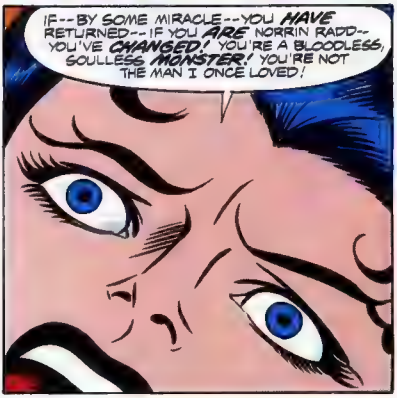
CAN YOU NOT SEE ME AS THE MAN I ONCE WAS-- BEFORE GALACTUS TRANS-FORMED ME?

WAIT! I NEVER MEANT TO FORESAKE YOU, MY LOVED ONE!
GALACTUS LEFT ME NO CHOICE!


I KNOW HE HAS ERASED MY MEMORY FROM WITHIN YOUR BRAIN!
BUT DOES NOT ONE TINY EMBER OF LOVE STILL LINGER-- DEEP WITHIN YOUR HEART?


LOOK AT ME! HEAR ME! REMEMBER! YOU MUST REMEMBER!
YOUR VOICE! IT IS THE VOICE OF--ANOTHER! BUT NO! IT CANNOT BE! HE IS GONE! HE IS GONE FOREVER!

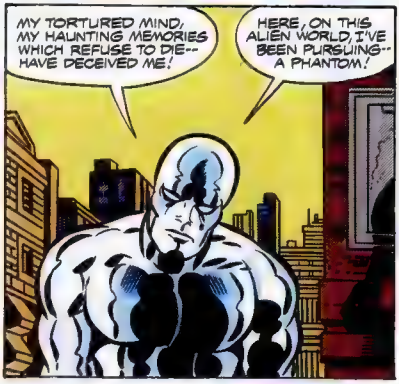
I REMEMBER HIM NOW! HE ABANDONED ME! HE ABANDONED ALL WHO LOVED HIM--TO JOIN GALACTUS--TO ROAM THE COSMOS!
NO!


IF--BY SOME MIRACLE--YOU HAVE RETURNED--IF YOU ARE NORRIN RADD-- YOU'VE CHANGED! YOU'RE A BLOODLESS, SOULLESS MONSTER! YOU'RE NOT THE MAN I ONCE LOVED!

CAN'T YOU SEE--I DID IT FOR YOU! I GAVE UP MY LOVE, MY WORLD, MY OWN MORTAL BODY-- TO SAVE ZENN-LA FROM GALACTUS!
IT WAS THE PRICE HE DEMANDED!

STAY BACK! WHOEVER--WHATEVER YOU ARE--YOU CANNOT TRICK ME WITH LIES!
I LOVE YOU, SHALLA BAL! NOW MORE THAN EVER!

SLOWLY, THE PAST SEEMS TO MELT, LEAVING ONLY THE LONELY PRESENT--ONLY THE SIGHT OF A STRANGE, TORMENTED FIGURE CRYING HOPELESSLY IN THE SMOG-FILLED STREET...
DO NOT LEAVE ME, SHALLA BAL!

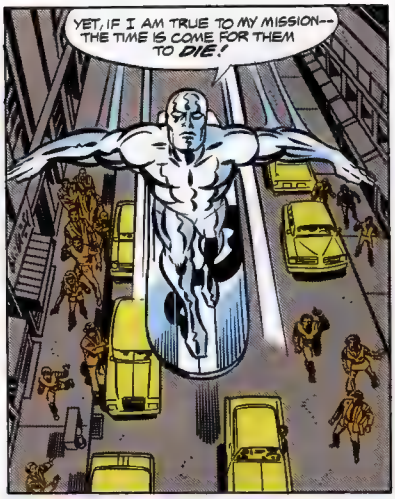

MY TORTURED MIND, MY HAUNTING MEMORIES WHICH REFUSE TO DIE--HAVE DECEIVED ME!
HERE, ON THIS ALIEN WORLD, I'VE BEEN PURSUING--A PHANTOM!

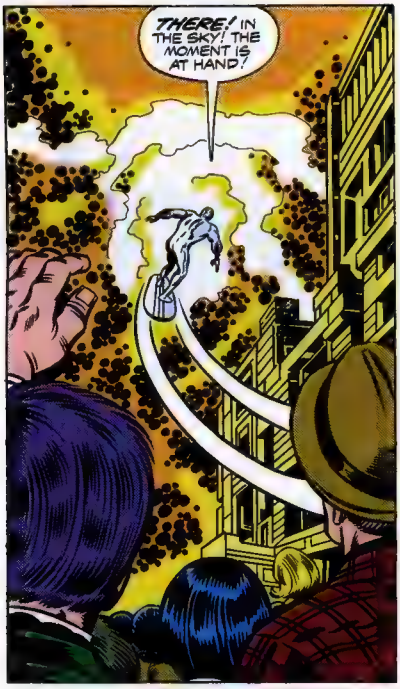
AND WHAT OF THEM-- THE EARTHLINGS? HAVE I SO SOON FORGOTTEN THEIR FATE?
HAVE I FORGOTTEN WHAT MY COMING WILL MEAN?

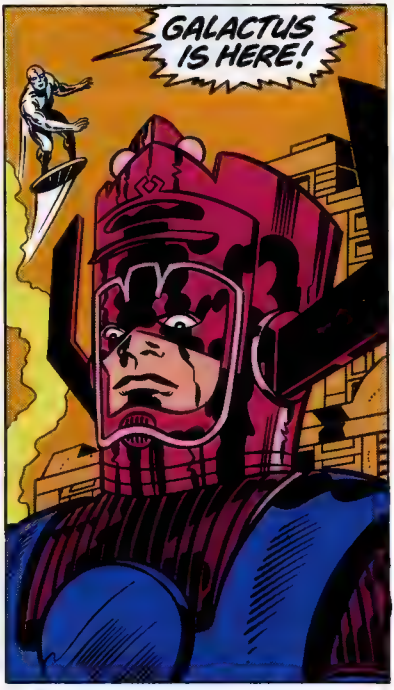
SOMEWHERE UP THERE--HE IS WAITING! WAITING TO DESTROY THEM!

AND I AM HIS INSTRUMENT--HIS HERALD--HIS PRESAGER OF DEATH!

IT HAS HAPPENED SO OFTEN IN THE PAST! BUT NOW, IT IS DIFFERENT!
THIS TIME I STAND UPON A PLANET PEOPLED WITH BEINGS WHO THINK, WHO FEEL, WHO STRIVE!
MAYS


YET, IF I AM TRUE TO MY MISSION-- THE TIME IS COME FOR THEM TO DIE!


THERE! IN THE SKY! THE MOMENT IS AT HAND!


GALACTUS IS HERE!

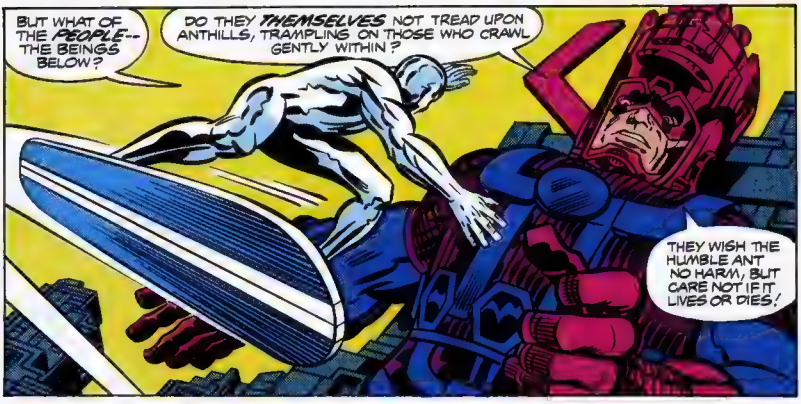
WELL HAVE YOU SERVED ME, MY HERALD!
I FIND THIS WORLD MOST SUITABLE!
BUT IT IS PEOPLED BY BILLIONS! THE PRICE IS TOO HIGH!

I AM GALACTUS! I DO WHAT I MUST!

"WITH EACH SLOWLY CHURNING DECADE, I FEEL THE PANGS OF GNAWING HUNGER-- HUNGER WHICH LESSER BEINGS CAN NEVER COMPREHEND-- HUNGER WHICH NAUGHT BUT LIVING ENERGY CAN ASSUAGE!
"LIVING ENERGY!" NEVER BEFORE HAVE I FOUND IT IN SUCH GREAT PROFUSION!"

"HERE SHALL I DRAIN THE GENTLY ROLLING SEAS! HERE SHALL THE BOUNTIFUL LAND YIELD TO ME ITS GIFT OF LIFE!"

"FINALLY, WHEN NAUGHT REMAINS SAVE A BARREN CLUSTER OF COSMIC REFUSE, FOREVER DRIFTING THROUGH ENDLESS SPACE, THEN-- AND ONLY THEN--WILL GALACTUS BE DONE! THEN-- AND ONLY THEN--WILL THE HUNGER BE SATED!"


BUT WHAT OF THE PEOPLE-- THE BEINGS BELOW?
DO THEY THEMSELVES NOT TREAD UPON ANTHILLS, TRAMPLING ON THOSE WHO CRAWL GENTLY WITHIN?
THEY WISH THE HUMBLE ANT NO HARM, BUT CARE NOT IF IT LIVES OR DIES!

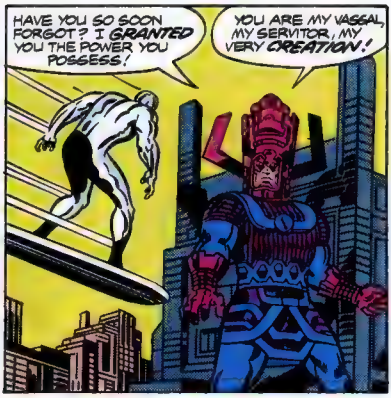
BUT WE SPEAK NOT OF ANTS! ARE THESE BEINGS NOT HUMAN?
YOUR QUESTION IS MIS-PLACED! ASK INSTEAD-- AM I NOT GALACTUS?

I BEAR THESE HAPLESS BEINGS NO ILL WILL! BUT THE HUNGER IS UPON ME! IF THEY MUST PERISH THAT GALACTUS MAY LIVE, THEN SO BE IT!
MINE IS THE POWER-- AND POWER IS ALL!

NO! POWER IS MINDLESS! POWER IS CRUEL! THERE MUST BE REASON BEYOND THE MADNESS!
REASON? WHO DARES SPEAK OF REASON? 'TIS POWER THAT RULES! HAVE THE AGES NOT PROVEN --LIFE HAS NO MEANING! THE COSMOS IS CHAOS!

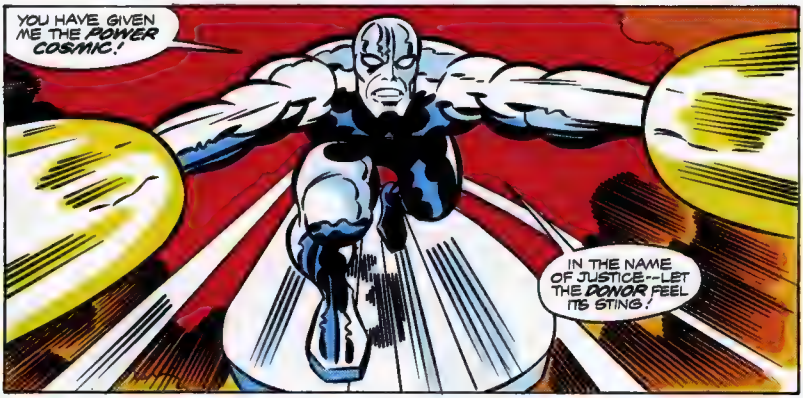
I WEARY OF THIS COLLOQUY! THE DIALOGUE IS ENDED, HERALD!
TOO LONG HAVE I WAITED! TOO LONG HAVE I HUNGERED! THE MOMENT IS MINE!
I SAY NO!

I BID YOU THINK! HOW SHALL THE HERALD DEFY THE MASTER?
HOW SHALL THE HERALD BE PARTY TO SLAUGHTER?


HAVE YOU SO SOON FORGOT? I GRANTED YOU THE POWER YOU POSSESS!
YOU ARE MY VASSAL, MY SERVITOR, MY VERY CREATION!

YOURS ARE THE TRAPPINGS!
BUT THE HEART IS MINE! THE SOUL IS MINE! AND REMEMBER YOU THIS--THE CONSCIENCE IS MINE!

ONCE BEFORE, DID I NOT SACRIFICE ALL THAT MY NATIVE WORLD MIGHT LIVE?
NOW I CAN DO--NO LESS!


YOU HAVE GIVEN ME THE POWER COSMIC!
IN THE NAME OF JUSTICE--LET THE DONOR FEEL ITS STING!

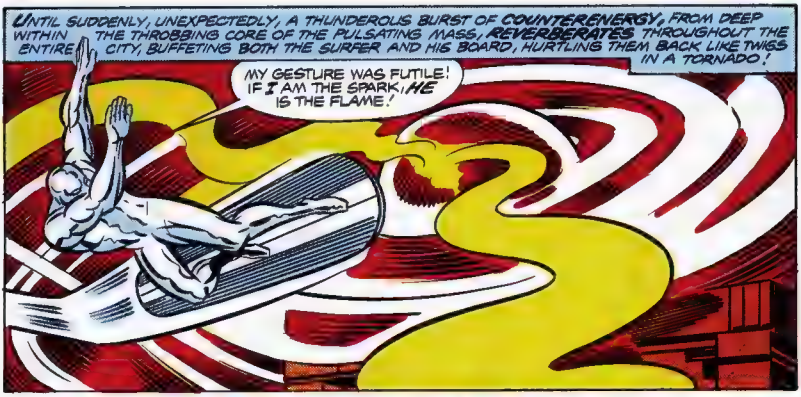
SO BEGINS ONE OF THE MOST INCREDIBLE BATTLES OF ALL TIME, AS A BLINDING FLASH OF UNEARTHLY INTENSITY BLANKETS THE CITY AND LIGHTS UP THE SKY!

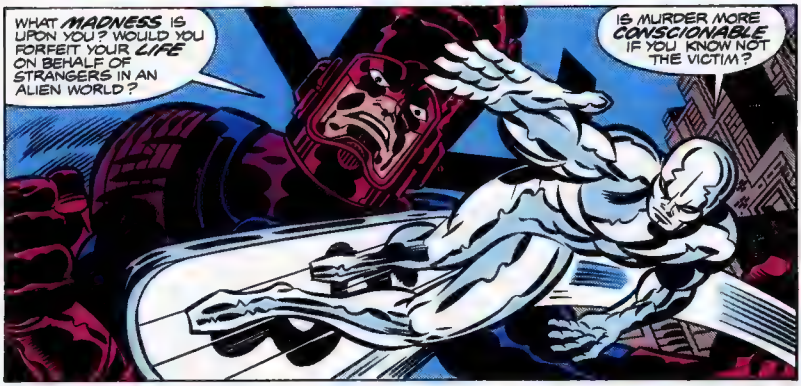
THEN, LIKE THE RAGING ROARING OF A THOUSAND THUNDERCLAPS, THE AWESOME VOICE OF GALACTUS HURLS FORTH HIS FATEFUL CHALLENGE!
YOU DARE THREATEN ME WITH POWER?
I--WHO AM POWER INCARNATE...?!!

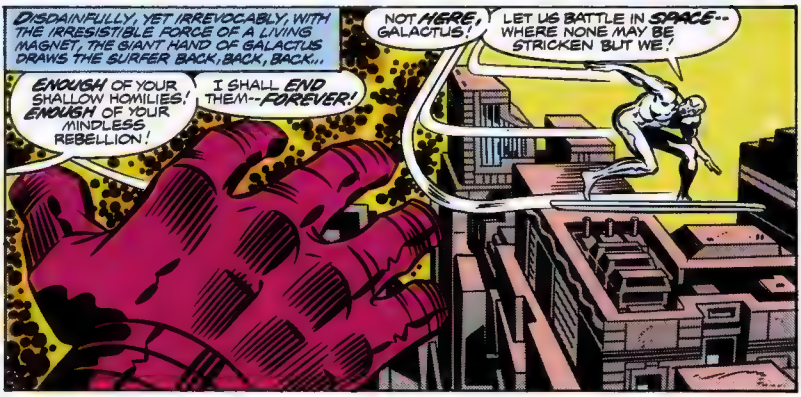
BUT, EVEN AS THE GIGANTIC FIGURE ADVANCES...
POWER COMES IN MANY FORMS! EVEN THE GOSSAMER CLOUD MAY CHALLENGE THE STORM!

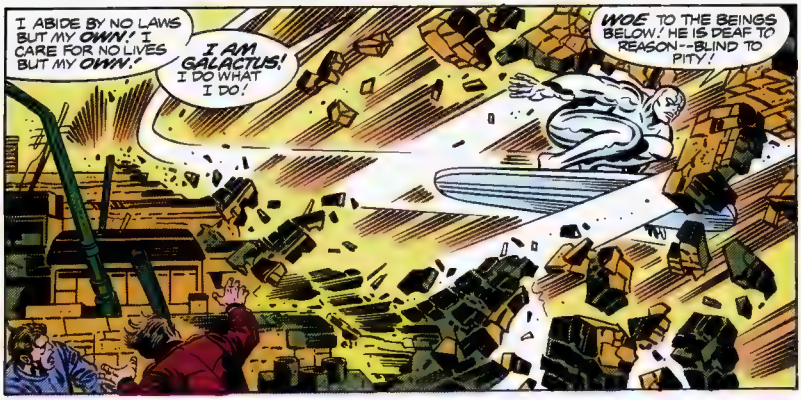
HURTLING PAST THE TOWERING FIGURE, THE SOARING SURFER ENMESHES HIS INHUMAN FOE IN A GLOWING COCOON OF SHIMMERING, SEETHING ENERGY.

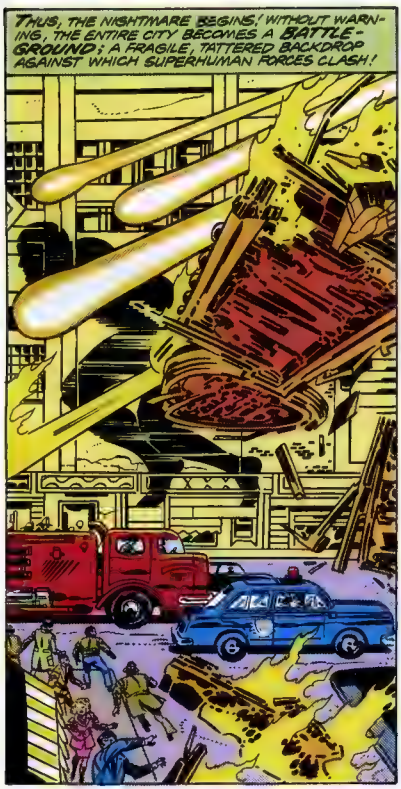
INSTANTLY, IT FORMS ITSELF INTO A SOLID, ROCK-HARD SHELL, WHICH GROWS STRONGER WITH EACH PASSING SECOND...


UNTIL SUDDENLY, UNEXPECTEDLY, A THUNDEROUS BURST OF COUNTERENERGY, FROM DEEP WITHIN THE THROBBING CORE OF THE PULSATING MASS, REVERBERATES THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE CITY, BUFFETING BOTH THE SURFER AND HIS BOARD, HURTLING THEM BACK LIKE TWIGS IN A TORNADO!
MY GESTURE WAS FUTILE! IF I AM THE SPARK, HE IS THE FLAME!

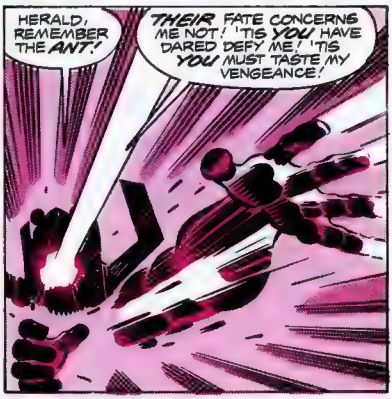

WHAT MADNESS IS UPON YOU? WOULD YOU FORFEIT YOUR LIFE ON BEHALF OF STRANGERS IN AN ALIEN WORLD?
IS MURDER MORE CONSCIONABLE IF YOU KNOW NOT THE VICTIM?


DISDAINFULLY, YET IRREVOCABLY, WITH THE IRRESISTIBLE FORCE OF A LIVING MAGNET, THE GIANT HAND OF GALACTUS DRAWS THE SURFER BACK, BACK, BACK...
ENOUGH OF YOUR SHALLOW HOMILIES! ENOUGH OF YOUR MINDLESS REBELLION!
I SHALL END THEM--FOREVER!
NOT HERE, GALACTUS!
LET US BATTLE IN SPACE-- WHERE NONE MAY BE STRICKEN BUT WE!

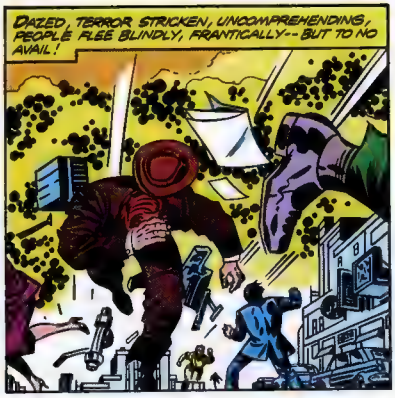

I ABIDE BY NO LAWS BUT MY OWN! I CARE FOR NO LIVES BUT MY OWN!
I AM GALACTUS! I DO WHAT I DO!
WOE TO THE BEINGS BELOW! HE IS DEAF TO REASON--BLIND TO PITY!

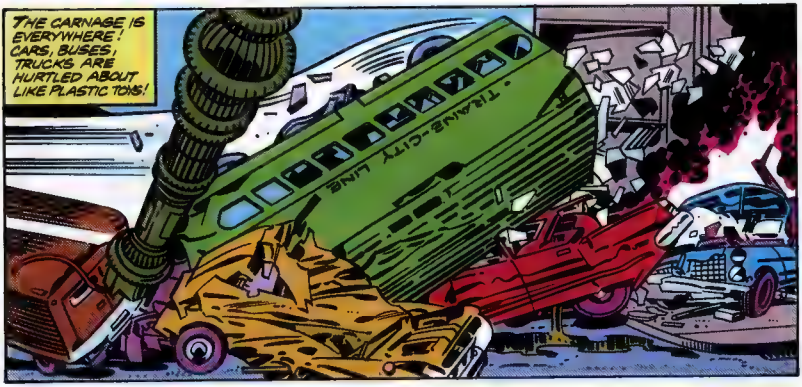

THUS, THE NIGHTMARE BEGINS! WITHOUT WARNING, THE ENTIRE CITY BECOMES A BATTLEGROUND; A FRAGILE, TATTERED BACKDROP AGAINST WHICH SUPERHUMAN FORCES CLASH!

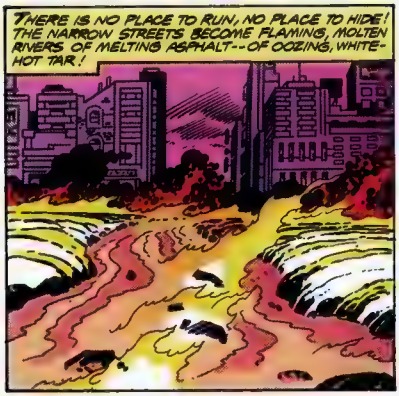
AND, THOUGH ONE TORTURED VOICE CRIES OUT IN PROTEST--
IT IS I WHO HAVE INCURRED YOUR WRATH!
LET NOT OTHERS BEAR THE CARNAGE!


HERALD, REMEMBER THE ANT!
THEIR FATE CONCERNS ME NOT! 'TIS YOU HAVE DARED DEFY ME! 'TIS YOU MUST TASTE MY VENGEANCE!

IN THE MOMENTS THAT FOLLOW, THE TEEMING URBAN BATTLEGROUND BECOMES A MAD INFERNO!


DAZED, TERROR STRICKEN, UNCOMPREHENDING, PEOPLE FLEE BLINDLY, FRANTICALLY--BUT TO NO AVAIL!


THE CARNAGE IS EVERYWHERE! CARS, BUSES, TRUCKS ARE HURTLED ABOUT LIKE PLASTIC TOYS!
TRANSIT-CITY LINE


THERE IS NO PLACE TO RUN, NO PLACE TO HIDE! THE NARROW STREETS BECOME FLAMING, MOLTEN RIVERS OF MELTING ASPHALT--OF OOZING, WHITE-HOT TAR!

EVEN THE SHELTERED SUBWAYS, DEEP WITHIN THE BOWELS OF EARTH, ARE INUNDATED WITH BURNING RUBBLE AND SMOLDERING DEBRIS!

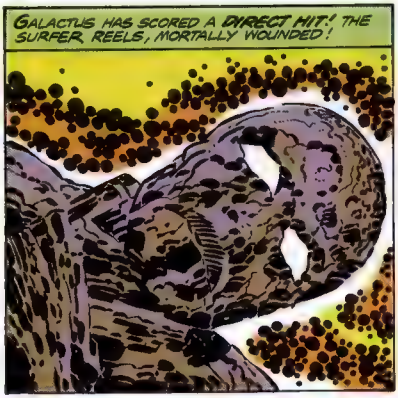
WHILE, ON THE SURFACE, NO RESIDENCE, OFFICE, FACTORY, OR STRUCTURE OF ANY SORT IS IMMUNE FROM THE INCENDIARY FURY OF THE TWO COSMIC COMBATANTS!

BUT, DESPITE THE HORROR, DESPITE THE DREAD, THERE ARE THOSE WHO IGNORE PERSONAL DANGER, WHO SACRIFICE ALL TO RECORD THE MOST FANTASTIC BATTLE EVER WITNESSED BY HUMAN EYES!

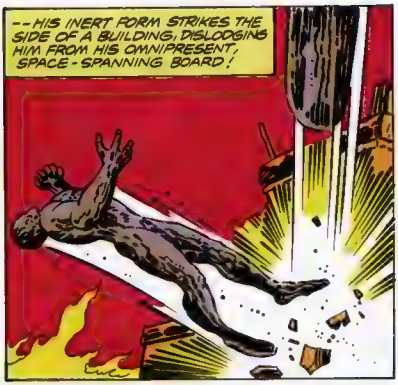
NO MATTER *HOW* I MAY MANEUVER, I CANNOT LURE HIM INTO PURSUING ME INTO THE *STRATOSPHERE*, SO THAT THOSE BELOW WILL COME TO NO HARM!

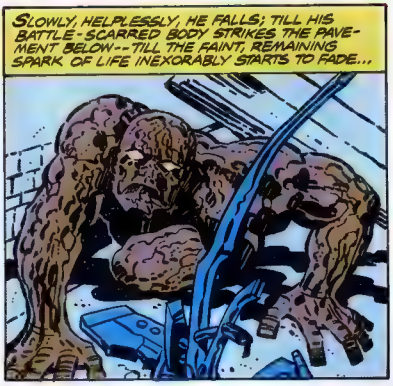
HE KNOWS FULL WELL THAT THE ADVANTAGE IS *HIS* UPON EARTH'S SURFACE, FOR I DARE NOT USE MY COSMIC SPEED TO--

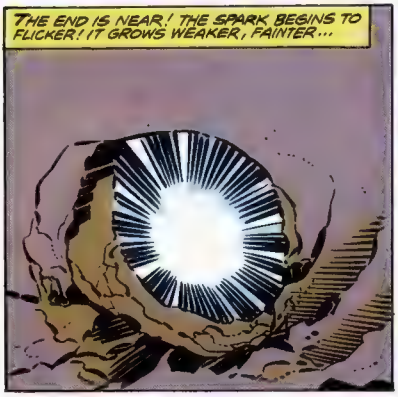
UNNGHH!

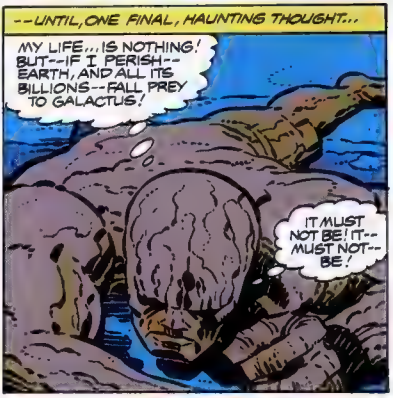

GALACTUS HAS SCORED A DIRECT HIT! THE SURFER REELS, MORTALLY WOUNDED!

DAZED, WEAKENED, OUT OF CONTROL, HE PLUMMETS TO THE GROUND, WHERE--


--HIS INERT FORM STRIKES THE SIDE OF A BUILDING, DISLODGING HIM FROM HIS OMNIPRESENT, SPACE-SPANNING BOARD!


SLOWLY, HELPLESSLY, HE FALLS; TILL HIS BATTLE-SCARRED BODY STRIKES THE PAVEMENT BELOW--TILL THE FAINT, REMAINING SPARK OF LIFE INEXORABLY STARTS TO FADE...


THE END IS NEAR! THE SPARK BEGINS TO FLICKER! IT GROWS WEAKER, FAINTER...


--UNTIL, ONE FINAL, HAUNTING THOUGHT...
MY LIFE... IS NOTHING! BUT--IF I PERISH--EARTH, AND ALL ITS BILLIONS--FALL PREY TO GALACTUS!
IT MUST NOT BE! IT--MUST NOT--BE!

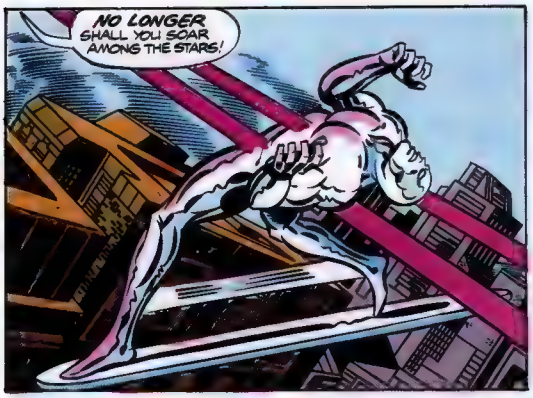
DESPERATELY, AGONIZINGLY, THE ALMOST LIFE-LESS FIGURE ABSORBS THE PULSATING ENERGY OF THE VERY GROUND BENEATH HIM! LIKE A LIVING SPONGE, HE PAINFULLY DRAWS THE COSMIC LIFE FORCES INTO HIS OWN THROBBING, ACHING BODY!
IT--MUST NOT--BE!
THE ELEMENTS THEMSELVES GLOW AND CRACKLE WITH A SURGE OF SHEER, UNHARNESS-ED POWER--POWER WHICH TRICKLES, THEN FLOWS, THEN SURGES THROUGH THE PRONE AND PAIN-WRACKED FIGURE!
THEN, LIKE A PHOENIX, THE SURFER RISES ONCE AGAIN!
GALACTUS HAS STRUCK! BUT STILL DO I STAND!
PERHAPS THERE IS ANOTHER FORCE, MIGHTIER THAN GALACTUS, THAT HATH DECREED--EARTH SHALL LIVE!
HEAR ME, GALACTUS! LET THERE BE AN END TO THIS MEANINGLESS BATTLE! CAN WE NOT SPEAK? MAY WE NOT BARGAIN?
I ASK BUT ONE TERM! LET MANKIND SURVIVE!
GALACTUS DOES NOT BARGAIN! YET, I TOO GROW WEARY OF THIS SENSELESS DUEL!
THEN NEED YOU YOUR HERALD--FOR I OFFER A PACT!

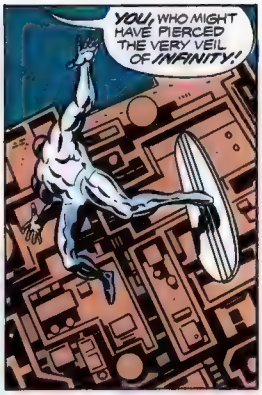
AS HIS ALABASTER BOARD RETURNS, IN ANSWER TO A SWIFT, SILENT SUMMONS, THE SILVER-HUED MASTER OF THE SPACEWAYS APPROACHES THE TOWERING FIGURE!
LET US LEAVE THIS PLANET! I SHALL FIND YOU OTHER WORLDS!
THE UNIVERSE IS BOUNDLESS -- AND YOU YOURSELF HAVE GIVEN ME THE POWER COSMIC!
NO! I SHALL NOT BE DENIED!

THREE BILLION LIVES SHALL NOT BE LOST! THE SURFER STANDS WITH EARTH!
THEN I DISAVOW GALACTUS!

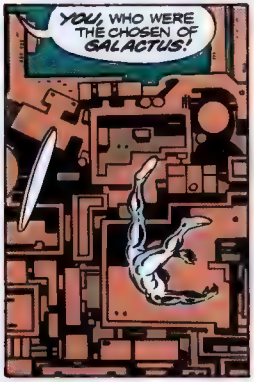
NOT FOR ME IS THE LUXURY OF PRIMITIVE EMOTION! I FEEL NO ANGER! I KNOW NO PITY! I MERELY DO WHAT MUST BE DONE!
IF YOU WOULD STAND WITH EARTH-- THEN SO YOU SHALL!

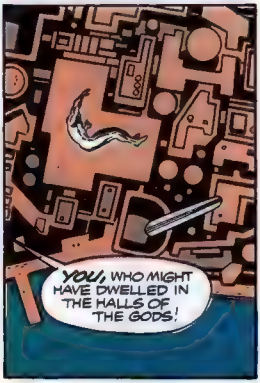
SINCE VENGEANCE IS FOR LESSER BEINGS, I LEAVE YOU YOUR LIFE!
BUT, YOU SHALL SPEND IT ON EARTH! THUS DO I CONSIGN YOU TO--A LIVING DEATH!


NO LONGER SHALL YOU SOAR AMONG THE STARS!

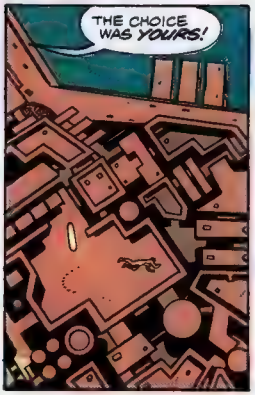

YOU, WHO MIGHT HAVE PIERCED THE VERY VEIL OF INFINITY!

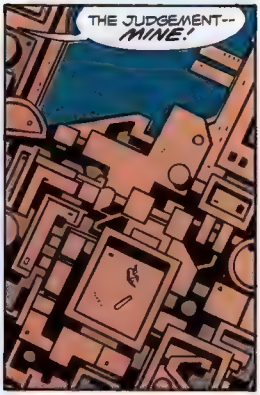
YOU, WHOSE ARENA WAS AS VAST AS SPACE ITSELF!


YOU, WHO WERE THE CHOSEN OF GALACTUS!

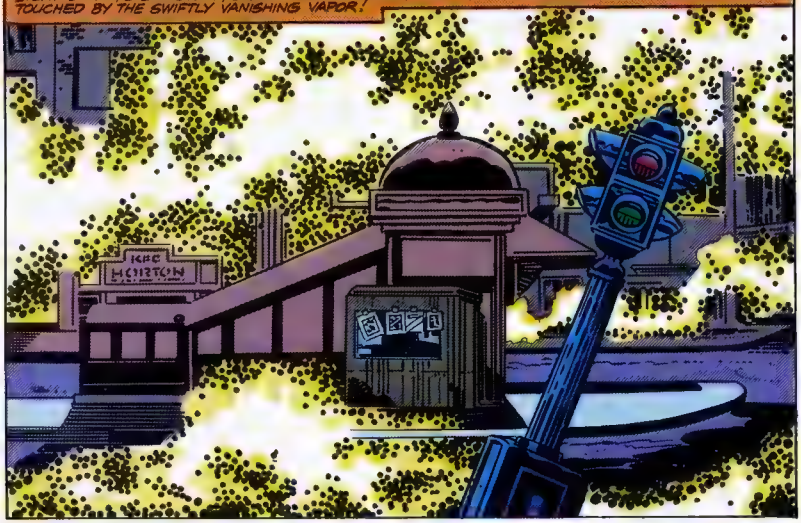

YOU, WHO MIGHT HAVE DWELLED IN THE HALLS OF THE GODS!

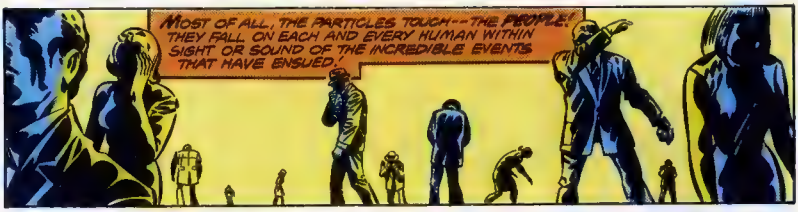
YOU HAVE CHOSEN, INSTEAD, THE DUNGHILLS OF MAN!

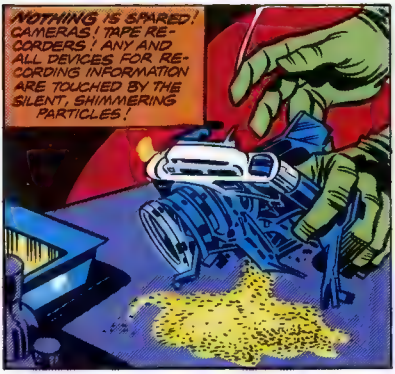

THE CHOICE WAS YOURS!

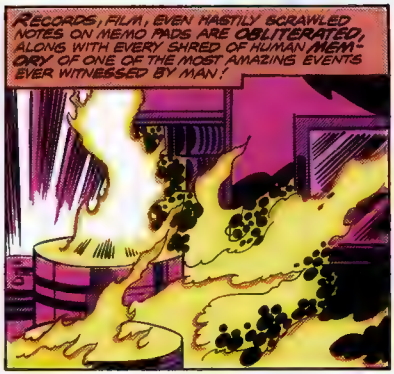

THE JUDGEMENT-- MINE!

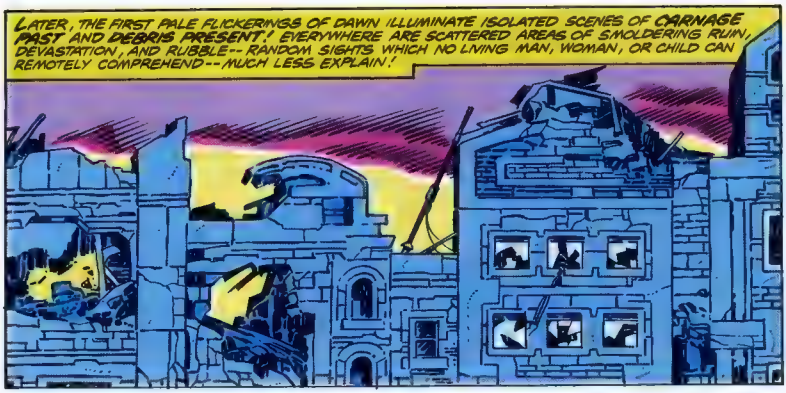
THROUGHOUT THE STUNNED CITY AND ITS ENVIRONS, AN UNEARTHLY, FATEFUL **SILENCE** GENTLY BLANKETS THE SCARRED AND RUBBLE-STREWN STREETS! THEN SLOWLY, INEXORABLY, A SHIMMERING MIST OF GLEAMING, GOLDEN PARTICLES DRIFTS DOWN FROM THE SKY, SOFTLY TOUCHING EVERY BRICK, EVERY STONE, EVERY PIECE OF WOOD, METAL, OR PLASTIC! **NOTHING** REMAINS UNTOUCHED BY THE SWIFTLY VANISHING VAPOR!

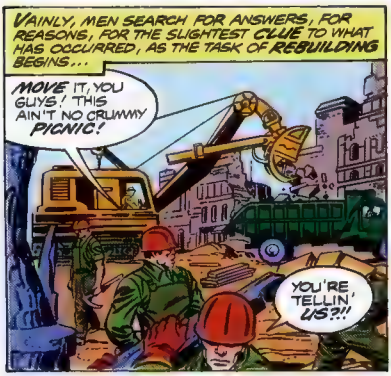




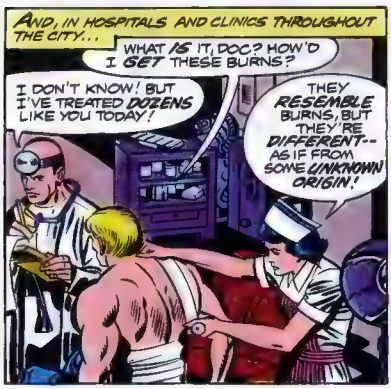


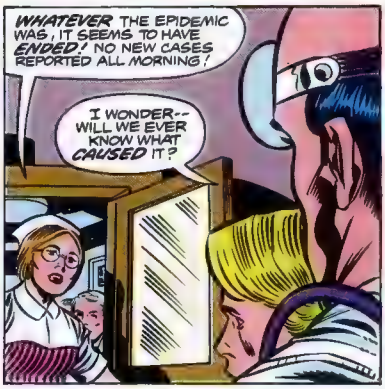



LATER, THE FIRST PALE FLICKERINGS OF DAWN ILLUMINATE ISOLATED SCENES OF CARNAGE PAST AND DEBRIS PRESENT! EVERYWHERE ARE SCATTERED AREAS OF SMOLDERING RUIN, DEVASTATION, AND RUBBLE-- RANDOM SIGHTS WHICH NO LIVING MAN, WOMAN, OR CHILD CAN REMOTELY COMPREHEND--MUCH LESS EXPLAIN!


VAINLY, MEN SEARCH FOR ANSWERS, FOR REASONS, FOR THE SLIGHTEST CLUE TO WHAT HAS OCCURRED, AS THE TASK OF REBUILDING BEGINS...
MOVE IT, YOU GUYS! THIS AIN'T NO CRUMMY PICNIC!
YOU'RE TELLIN' US?!!

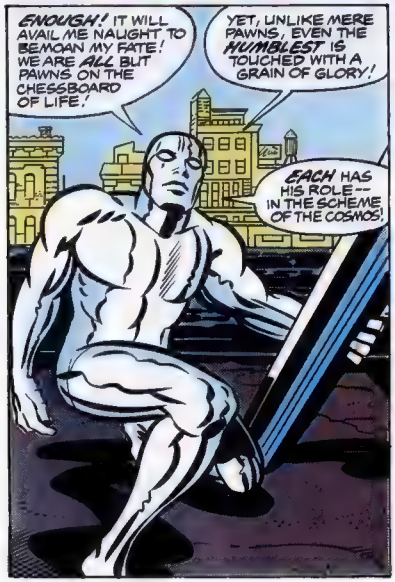
I DON'T GET IT! IT'S IMPOSSIBLE! NOTHING COULDA DONE SO MUCH DAMAGE WITHOUT ANYONE KNOWIN' WHO--OR WHAT!!
C'MON--THEY KNOW! I'LL BET IT WUZ SOME KINDA ATOMIC ENERGY EXPERIMENT THEY SCREWED UP--
BUT THEY AIN'T ABOUT TO ADMIT IT!


AND, IN HOSPITALS AND CLINICS THROUGHOUT THE CITY...
WHAT IS IT, DOC? HOW'D I GET THESE BURNS?
I DON'T KNOW! BUT I'VE TREATED DOZENS LIKE YOU TODAY!
THEY RESEMBLE BURNS, BUT THEY'RE DIFFERENT-- AS IF FROM SOME UNKNOWN ORIGIN!

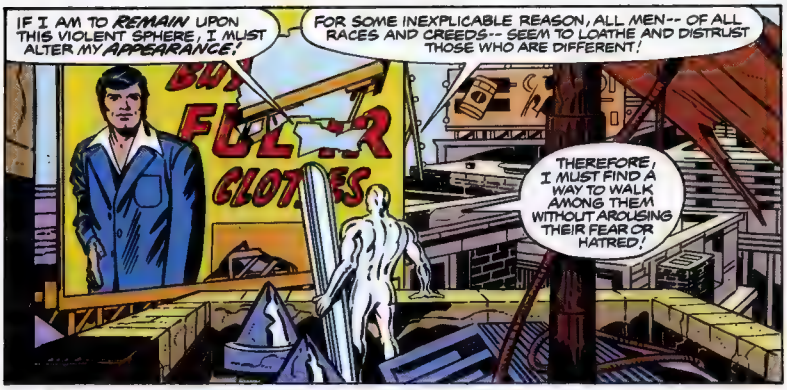

WHATEVER THE EPIDEMIC WAS, IT SEEMS TO HAVE ENDED! NO NEW CASES REPORTED ALL MORNING!
I WONDER-- WILL WE EVER KNOW WHAT CAUSED IT?

BUT ONE THERE IS WHO KNOWS THE ANSWER; ONE WHOSE MEMORY HAS NOT BEEN TAMPERED WITH--FOR THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN TOO MERCIFUL! IT WAS INTENDED THAT THE SILVER SURFER REMEMBER--AND REGRET!
I HAVE LAIN HERE FOR MANY EARTH DAYS! NOW, THE NIGHTMARE IS ENDED! AND YET, I FEAR TO OPEN MY EYES, FOR I KNOW TOO WELL--
IT WAS NO NIGHTMARE!

GALACTUS IS GONE! NO LONGER DO I SENSE HIS AWESOME PRESENCE!
NOW, HERE I REMAIN, ALONE AND ABANDONED IN AN ALIEN LAND--AMONGST ALIEN BEINGS!


ENOUGH! IT WILL AVAIL ME NAUGHT TO BEMOAN MY FATE! WE ARE ALL BUT PAWNS ON THE CHESSBOARD OF LIFE!
YET, UNLIKE MERE PAWNS, EVEN THE HUMBLEST IS TOUCHED WITH A GRAIN OF GLORY!
EACH HAS HIS ROLE--IN THE SCHEME OF THE COSMOS!

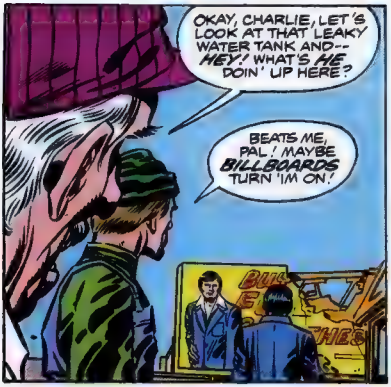
HOW SMALL AND INEFFECTUAL THEY SEEM! BUT, HOW MIRACULOUSLY UNIQUE THEY ARE! NOWHERE IN THE COUNTLESS GALAXIES HAVE I SEEN THEIR LIKE!

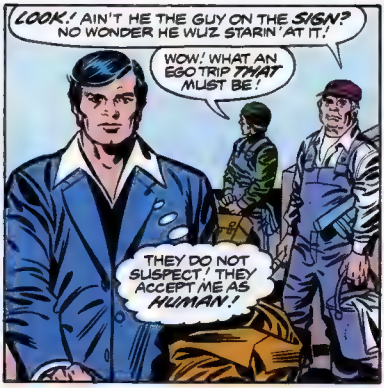

IF I AM TO REMAIN UPON THIS VIOLENT SPHERE, I MUST ALTER MY APPEARANCE!
FOR SOME INEXPLICABLE REASON, ALL MEN-- OF ALL RACES AND CREEDS-- SEEM TO LOATHE AND DISTRUST THOSE WHO ARE DIFFERENT!
THEREFORE, I MUST FIND A WAY TO WALK AMONG THEM WITHOUT AROUSING THEIR FEAR OR HATRED!

LET ME THEN CONCENTRATE UPON THE PICTURE ON THAT SIGN ACROSS THE STREET...

LET MY BRAIN, MY BLOOD, THE VERY FIBERS OF MY BEING ABSORB THE ASPECT AND THE IMAGE...

LET EACH MOLECULE WITHIN ME OBEY THE URGING OF MY MIND-- THE SILENT COMMAND WHICH IS THE POWER COSMIC!


OKAY, CHARLIE, LET'S LOOK AT THAT LEAKY WATER TANK AND-- HEY! WHAT'S HE DOIN' UP HERE?
BEATS ME, PAL! MAYBE BILLBOARDS TURN 'IM ON!


LOOK! AIN'T HE THE GUY ON THE SIGN? NO WONDER HE WUZ STARIN' AT IT!
WOW! WHAT AN EGO TRIP THAT MUST BE!
THEY DO NOT SUSPECT! THEY ACCEPT ME AS HUMAN!

BUT NOW FOR THE TRULY CRUCIAL TEST!
NOW I MUST WALK AMONG THEM--I MUST MINGLE AT CLOSE RANGE!

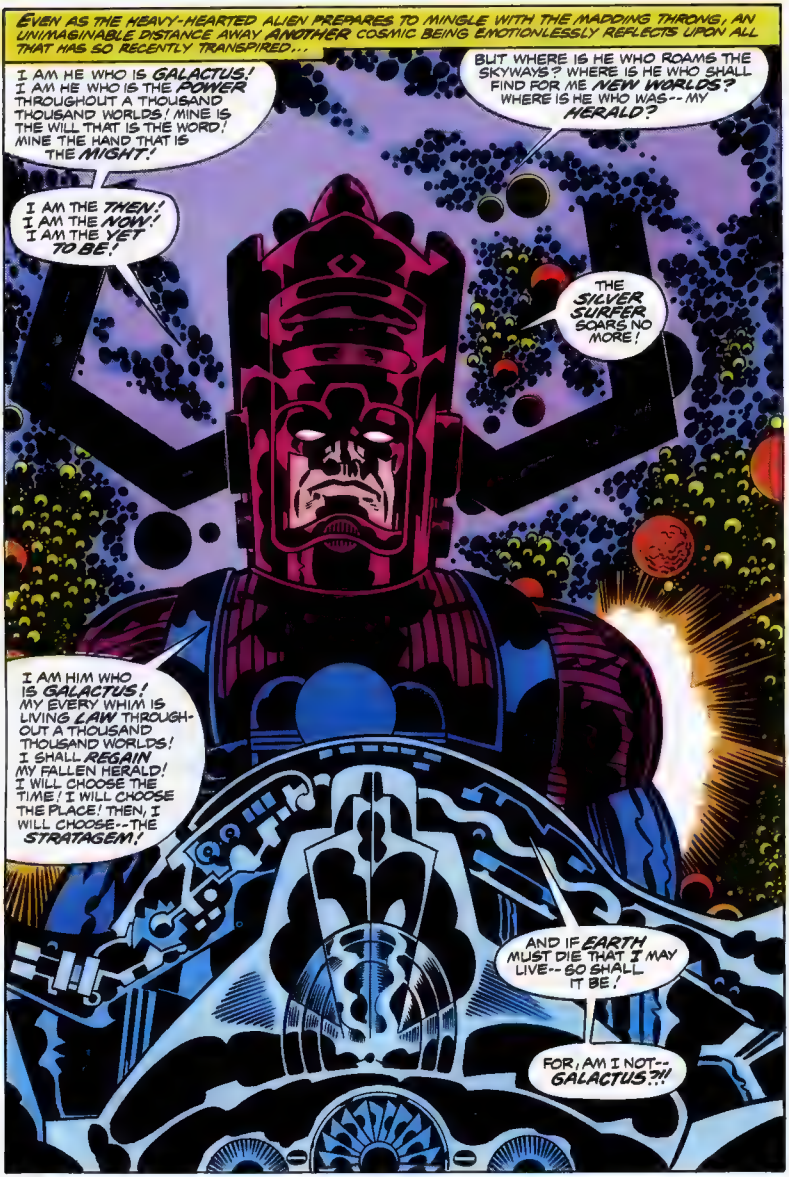
A CROWDED CONVEYANCE! IF THEY SENSE NO ALIEN PRESENCE HERE--!

I AM SAFE! THEY ARE OBLIVIOUS TO ALL BUT THEMSELVES!
THEY HAVE NOT YET ATTAINED THE MASTERY OF EXTRA-SENSORY SKILLS!

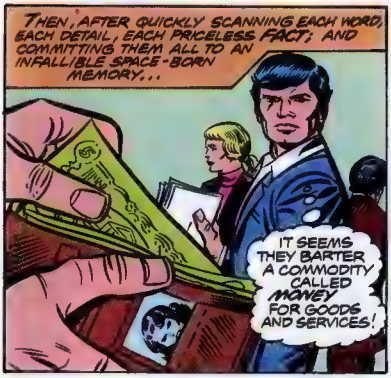
HOW FORTUNATE THEY ARE THAT IT IS THE SILVER SURFER WHO STANDS THUS UNDETECTED, RATHER THAN ONE WHO WOULD WILL THEM HARM!

I HAVE TESTED ENOUGH! I NEED HAVE NO FEAR OF UN-TOWARD DISCOVERY!
BUT STILL AM I FACED BY A FAR GREATER CHALLENGE...

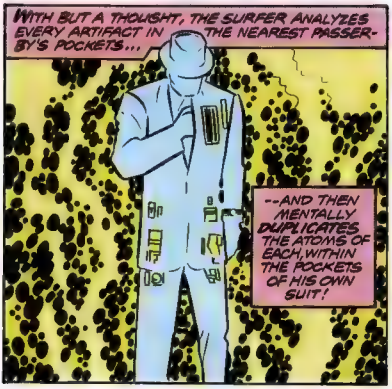
I MUST RESIGN MYSELF TO LIFE AMONGST AN IMMATURE AND PRIMITIVE RACE, WHOSE TECHNOLOGY HAS FAR OUTSTRIPPED ITS CONSCIENCE!
A RACE WHICH, IN ITS ENTHUSIASM AND ITS INNOCENCE, HOVERS ON THE BRINK OF SELF-DESTRUCTION!


EVEN AS THE HEAVY-HEARTED ALIEN PREPARES TO MINGLE WITH THE MADDING THRONG, AN UNIMAGINABLE DISTANCE AWAY ANOTHER COSMIC BEING EMOTIONLESSLY REFLECTS UPON ALL THAT HAS SO RECENTLY TRANSPIRED...
I AM HE WHO IS GALACTUS! I AM HE WHO IS THE POWER THROUGHOUT A THOUSAND THOUSAND WORLDS! MINE IS THE WILL THAT IS THE WORD! MINE THE HAND THAT IS THE MIGHT!
BUT WHERE IS HE WHO ROAMS THE SKYWAYS? WHERE IS HE WHO SHALL FIND FOR ME NEW WORLDS? WHERE IS HE WHO WAS-- MY HERALD?
I AM THE THEN! I AM THE NOW! I AM THE YET TO BE!
THE SILVER SURFER SOARS NO MORE!
I AM HIM WHO IS GALACTUS! MY EVERY WHIM IS LIVING LAW THROUGHOUT A THOUSAND THOUSAND WORLDS! I SHALL REGAIN MY FALLEN HERALD! I WILL CHOOSE THE TIME! I WILL CHOOSE THE PLACE! THEN, I WILL CHOOSE--THE STRATAGEM!
AND IF EARTH MUST DIE THAT I MAY LIVE--SO SHALL IT BE!
FOR, AM I NOT-- GALACTUS?!!

BUT, EVEN AS GALACTUS BROODS, A SOMBER-VISAGED "MAN" PICKS UP A DISCARDED NEWS-PAPER...
I MUST FAMILIARIZE MYSELF WITH ALL THAT TRAN-SPIRES UPON THIS PLANET!
THERE IS NO GREATER FORCE--NO GREATER POWER--THAN KNOWLEDGE ITSELF!
NEWS-RECORD
CRISIS DEEPENS IN BORDER FLARE-UP


THEN, AFTER QUICKLY SCANNING EACH WORD, EACH DETAIL, EACH PRICELESS FACT; AND COMMITTING THEM ALL TO AN INFALLIBLE SPACE-BORN MEMORY...
IT SEEMS THEY BARTER A COMMODITY CALLED MONEY FOR GOODS AND SERVICES!

I MUST LEARN WHAT OTHER TRINKETS THEY CARRY ON THEIR PERSONS, AND HOW SUCH ITEMS ARE EMPLOYED!

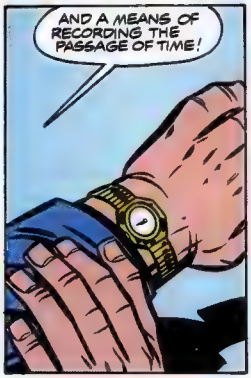

WITH BUT A THOUGHT, THE SURFER ANALYZES EVERY ARTIFACT IN THE NEAREST PASSER-BY'S POCKETS...
--AND THEN MENTALLY DUPLICATES THE ATOMS OF EACH, WITHIN THE POCKETS OF HIS OWN SUIT!

IT IS DONE! NOW TO STUDY EACH OBJECT WITH CARE, THAT I MAY LEARN ITS FUNCTION!

SWIFTLY, THOUGH CAREFULLY, THE SURFER FINGERS EACH ITEM...
THIS CASE CONTAINS WHAT I WOULD EXPECT!
THE ALL-IMPORTANT "MONEY", PLUS IDENTIFYING CARDS AND PICTURES OF FAMILY AND FRIENDS!

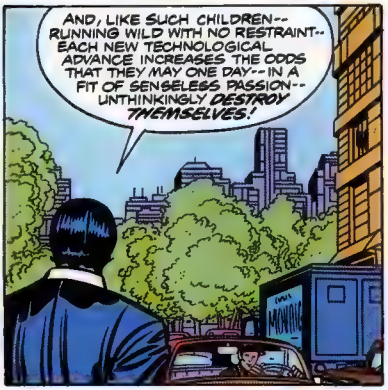
A SMALL BOX, ORNATELY WRAPPED! A GIFT INTENDED FOR ONE HELD DEAR!
AS I SUSPECTED, THE GIVING OF PRESENTS DENOTES THAT THEY HAVE GREAT CAPACITY FOR UN-SELFISH LOVE!

A WRITING INSTRUMENT OF SOME SORT...


AND A MEANS OF RECORDING THE PASSAGE OF TIME!

STRANGE-- DESPITE THEIR INTELLIGENCE, THEY HAVE AN IRRATIONAL DESIRE TO ABSORB SMOKE INTO THEIR BODIES!

IT IS AS I THOUGHT! THEY ARE LIKE CLEVER CHILDREN--INNOCENT, UNPREDICTABLE, AND IMMATURE!


AND, LIKE SUCH CHILDREN-- RUNNING WILD WITH NO RESTRAINT-- EACH NEW TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCE INCREASES THE ODDS THAT THEY MAY ONE DAY--IN A FIT OF SENSELESS PASSION-- UNTHINKINGLY DESTROY THEMSELVES!

HOW SMALL THEY ARE! HOW WEAK AND FRAIL! HOW VULNERABLE TO THE MIGHTY FORCES OF NATURE-- TO THE SUDDEN, SAVAGE WHIMS OF FATE!

AND YET, HOW THEY BUILD, HOW THEY STRIVE; HOW THEY YEARN FOR PEACE, AND TREASURE EACH RARE MOMENT OF HAPPINESS!

HOW CAN THEY SUSPECT THAT SOMEWHERE, IN THE VAST EMPTINESS OF SPACE, GALACTUS WAITS?

AND EVEN IF THEY KNEW, WHAT COULD IT AVAIL THEM?

EVEN I-- POSSESSED OF THE POWER COSMIC--CANNOT FOR LONG DEFY HIM!

HEY, MAN-- HOW LUCKY CAN YA GET? LOOK'A WHAT WE FOUND!

YEAH, MAN! WE'RE SET FER A SMOKE-- AN' WE AIN'T GOT NO MATCH!

PERHAPS I CAN HELP YOU!

YOU KNOW IT, MAN!

AWRIGHT, JACK-- JUST SIT REAL QUIET-LIKE, AND HOPE!
HOPE?

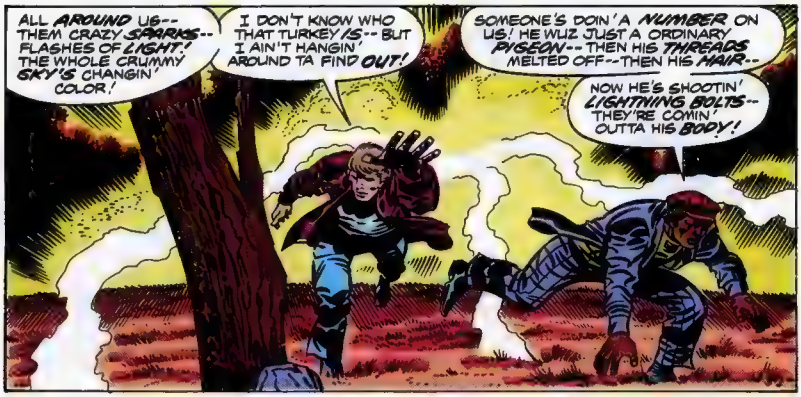
YEAH, BRIGHT BOY! HOPE YA GOT ENUFF BREAD ON YA SO'S WE WON'T BE-- DISAPPOINTED!
THOUGH HIS SPEECH IS COLLOQUIAL, I SENSE HIS MEANING!
AND I LIKE IT NOT!

SSSSSTT!
MY HAND!

HEY! YOU JUST SAT THERE--AND YA MADE 'IM DROP HIS KNIFE! WHAT YOU GOT--A BATTERY ON YA?
MAYBE HE'S A DECOY! THAT'S IT! HE'S THE MAN!

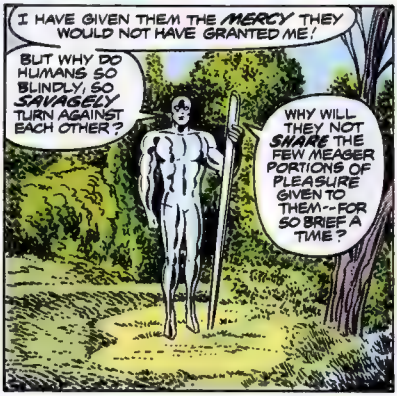
THEN HE AIN'T ALONE! THERE'S OTHER FUZZ HIDIN' IN THE BUSHES!
WHAT'LL WE DO? WE CAN'T--HEY!!
WH-WHAT'S HAPPENIN' TO 'IM?!!

I AM ALONE! BUT THAT WILL OFFER YOU SCANT COMFORT!
THE TIME IS COME TO SHED MY MORTAL GUISE!

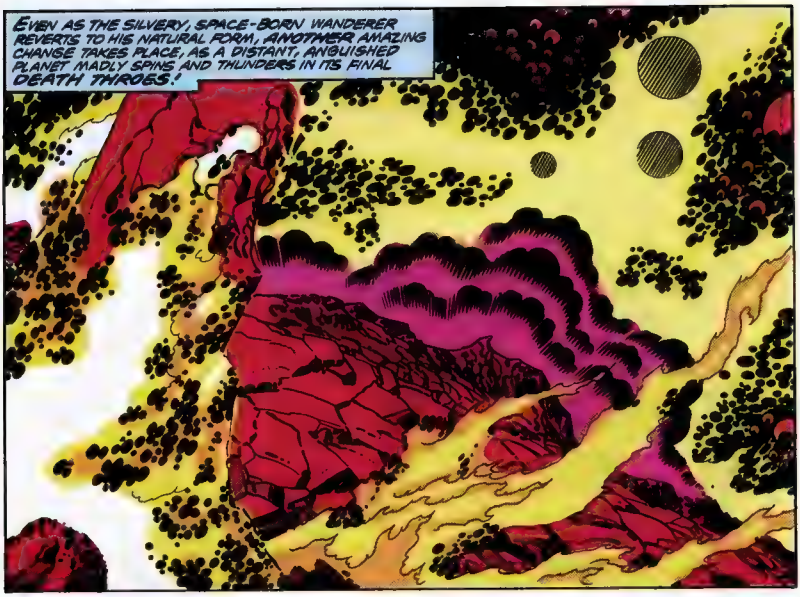

ALL AROUND US-- THEM CRAZY SPARKS-- FLASHES OF LIGHT! THE WHOLE CRUMMY SKY'S CHANGIN' COLOR!
I DON'T KNOW WHO THAT TURKEY IS-- BUT I AIN'T HANGIN' AROUND TA FIND OUT!
SOMEONE'S DOIN' A NUMBER ON US! HE WUZ JUST A ORDINARY PIGEON-- THEN HIS THREADS MELTED OFF--THEN HIS HAIR--
NOW HE'S SHOOTIN' LIGHTNING BOLTS-- THEY'RE COMIN' OUTTA HIS BODY!

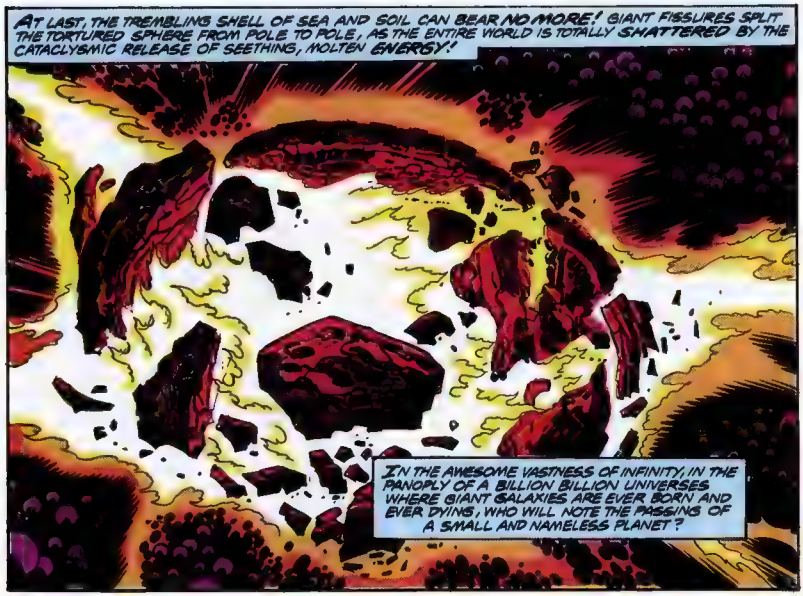
IT'S LIKE RUNNIN' IN A MINE FIELD! HE MUSTA BOOBY-TRAPPED THE WHOLE CRUDDY PARK!
WE'LL NEVER GET OUTTA HERE ALIVE!

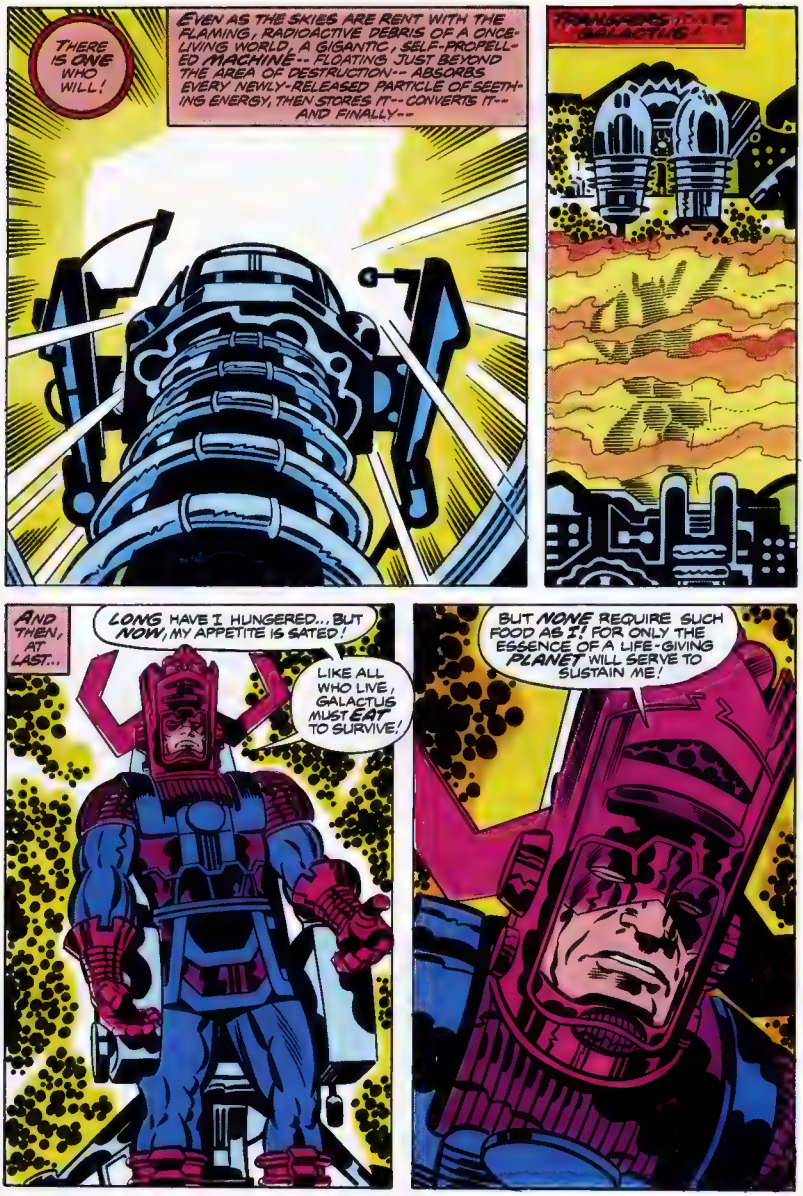
SUDDENLY, A COMPELLING VOICE RINGS OUT ABOVE THE DIN--A VOICE RICH IN POWER AND COMMAND, YET TINGED WITH SADNESS...
YOU MAY LEAVE-- UNHARMED!


I HAVE GIVEN THEM THE MERCY THEY WOULD NOT HAVE GRANTED ME!
BUT WHY DO HUMANS SO BLINDLY, SO SAVAGELY TURN AGAINST EACH OTHER?
WHY WILL THEY NOT SHARE THE FEW MEAGER PORTIONS OF PLEASURE GIVEN TO THEM--FOR SO BRIEF A TIME?

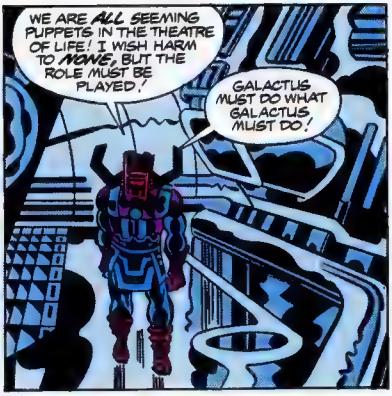
I'LL HAVE NO MORE OF SUB-TERFUGE! EVER WILL I BE A STRANGER UPON THIS TRAGIC SPHERE!
BUT, IF ALIEN I MUST REMAIN-- LET ME STAND WITH PRIDE AND HONOR--AS THE SILVER SURFER!

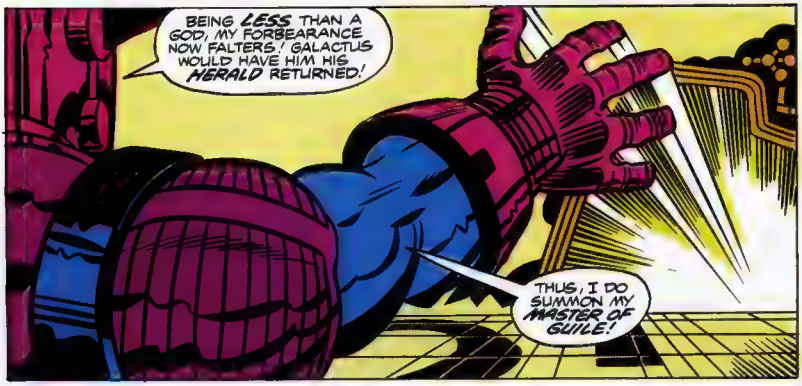

EVEN AS THE SILVERY, SPACE-BORN WANDERER REVERTS TO HIS NATURAL FORM, ANOTHER AMAZING CHANGE TAKES PLACE, AS A DISTANT, ANGUISHED PLANET MADLY SPINS AND THUNDERS IN ITS FINAL DEATH THROES!


AT LAST, THE TREMBLING SHELL OF SEA AND SOIL CAN BEAR NO MORE! GIANT FISSURES SPLIT THE TORTURED SPHERE FROM POLE TO POLE, AS THE ENTIRE WORLD IS TOTALLY SHATTERED BY THE CATACLYSMIC RELEASE OF SEETHING, MOLTEN ENERGY!
IN THE AWESOME VASTNESS OF INFINITY, IN THE PANOPLY OF A BILLION BILLION UNIVERSES WHERE GIANT GALAXIES ARE EVER BORN AND EVER DYING, WHO WILL NOTE THE PASSING OF A SMALL AND NAMELESS PLANET?


THERE IS ONE WHO WILL!
EVEN AS THE SKIES ARE RENT WITH THE FLAMING, RADIOACTIVE DEBRIS OF A ONCE-LIVING WORLD, A GIGANTIC, SELF-PROPELLED MACHINE-- FLOATING JUST BEYOND THE AREA OF DESTRUCTION-- ABSORBS EVERY NEWLY-RELEASED PARTICLE OF SEETHING ENERGY, THEN STORES IT-- CONVERTS IT-- AND FINALLY--
GALACTUS!
AND THEN, AT LAST...
LONG HAVE I HUNGERED... BUT NOW, MY APPETITE IS SATED!
LIKE ALL WHO LIVE, GALACTUS MUST EAT TO SURVIVE!
BUT NONE REQUIRE SUCH FOOD AS I! FOR ONLY THE ESSENCE OF A LIFE-GIVING PLANET WILL SERVE TO SUSTAIN ME!

WHY MUST HELPLESS WORLDS CRUMBLE THAT GALACTUS MAY STAND?
'TIS NOT MY WILL! 'TWAS NOT MY DOING! EVEN ONE SUCH AS I AM BY DESTINY BOUND!
EVEN FROM ME IS THE MASTER PLAN HIDDEN!


WE ARE ALL SEEMING PUPPETS IN THE THEATRE OF LIFE! I WISH HARM TO NONE, BUT THE ROLE MUST BE PLAYED!
GALACTUS MUST DO WHAT GALACTUS MUST DO!


BEING LESS THAN A GOD, MY FORBEARANCE NOW FALTERS! GALACTUS WOULD HAVE HIM HIS HERALD RETURNED!
THUS, I DO SUMMON MY MASTER OF GUILE!

YOU, WHO EXIST ONLY IN THE DARKEST RECESS OF MY OWN BROODING MIND, I COMMAND YOU--APPEAR!

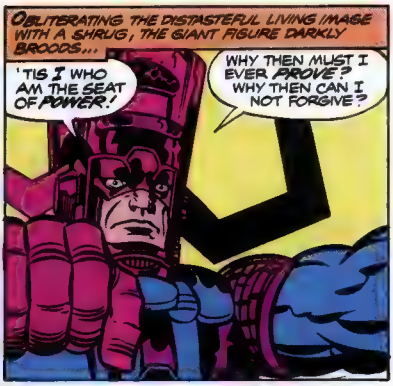
GALACTUS HAS CHOSEN TO CONJURE ME HITHER!
HOW NOW SHALL I SERVE MY LORD?

I AM BEREFT OF MY HERALD! I WOULD HAVE HIM RETURN!
SURELY YOU JEST, LORD! YOU HAVE ONLY TO SUMMON-- AS YOU DID ME!
NO! HE HAS RENOUNCED HIS MASTER! HE STANDS WITH THE PLANET EARTH!
THEN DESTROY THE PLANET ENTIRE-- AND WITH IT THE SURFER!
HIM WHO DENIES YOU CAN EXPECT NOTHING LESS!
BUT SURELY I TELL YOU NOTHING YOU KNOW NOT YOURSELF!
SPEAK, NONETHE-LESS!
ONLY BY HEARING THE EVIL, THE MERCILESS WITHIN ME, CAN I KNOW IT FOR WHAT IT IS!
'TIS NOT VENGEANCE I SEEK! I BUT CLAIM MY RIGHTFUL DUE!
MOUTH ME NOW A PLAN-- WORTHY OF GALACTUS!
IF YOU WISH NOT TO SLAY HIM, THEN HE MUST BE TRICKED!
WE MUST SET HIM A TRAP, LORD!
WORDS! EMPTY WORDS! SINCE HE HOLDS HONOR DEARER THAN LIFE, WHERE SHALL I FIND THE BAIT?
YOU MUST CALL FORTH--A FEMALE!
FOR ONLY HIS HEART CAN BETRAY HIM!

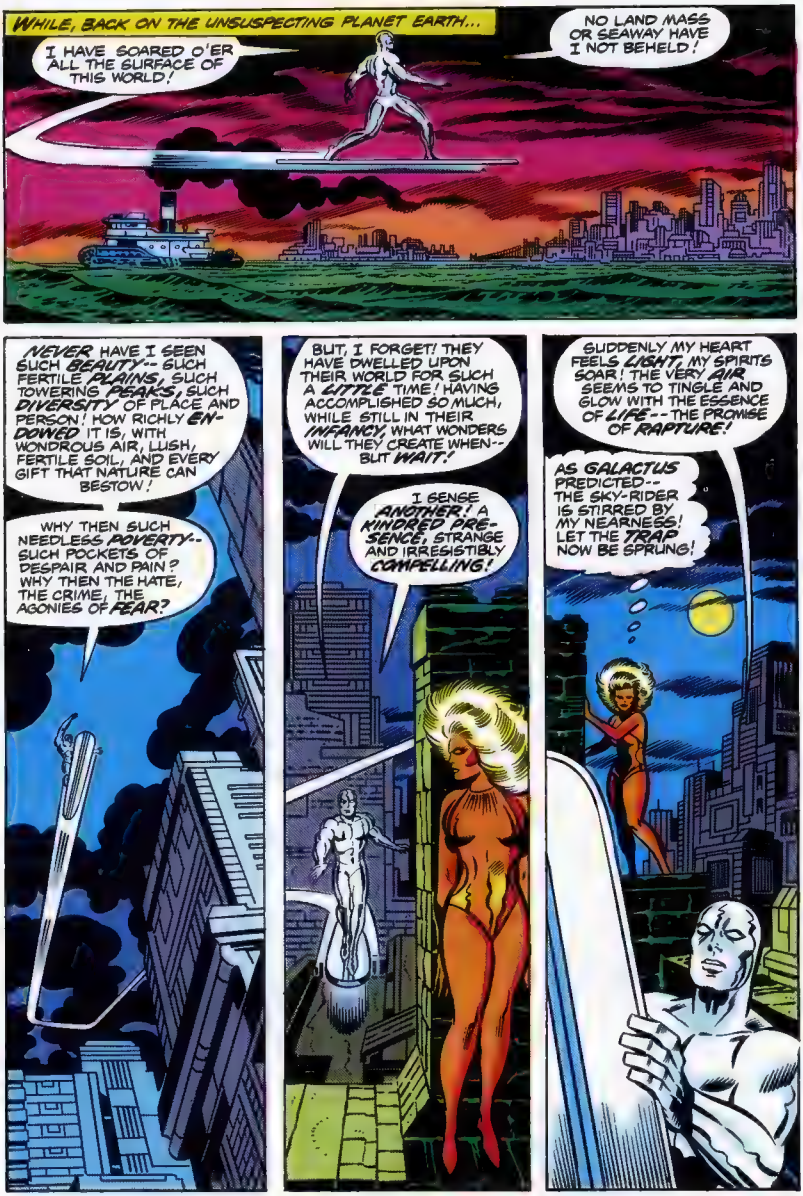
ENOUGH!
MY LORD, HAVE I DISPLEASED YOU?

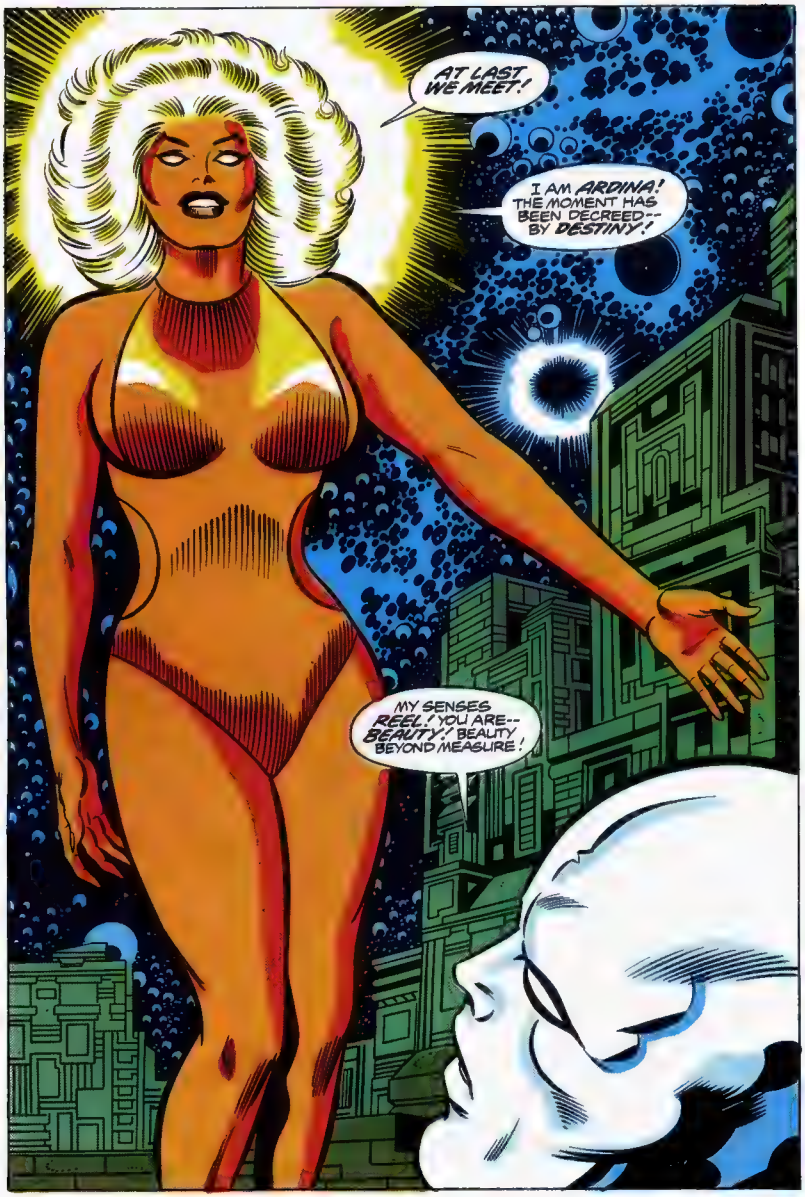
NO! THE PLAN HAS MERIT! IT IS THE SOLUTION TRUE!
BUT HAVE YOU NOT REVEALED THE DEADLY PITFALL OF POWER ABSOLUTE? WILL I NOT EMPLOY ANY DEVICE--STOOP TO ANY MEANS--TO ATTAIN MY GOAL?

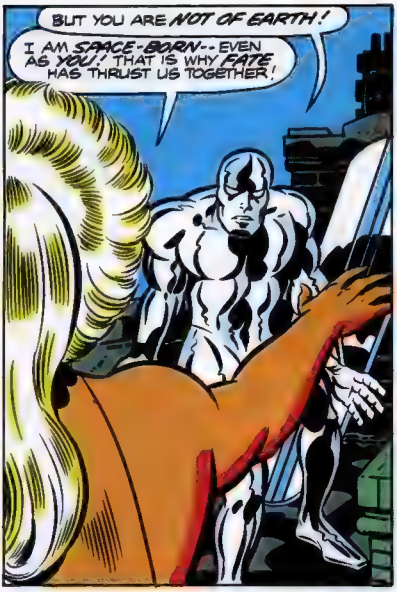
YOU HAVE SHOWN GALACTUS TO GALACTUS! I LIKE NOT WHAT I BEHOLD!

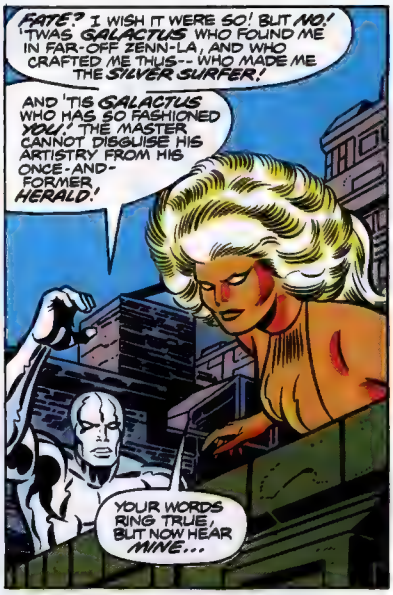

OBLITERATING THE DISTASTEFUL LIVING IMAGE WITH A SHRUG, THE GIANT FIGURE DARKLY BROODS...
'TIS I WHO AM THE SEAT OF POWER!
WHY THEN MUST I EVER PROVE? WHY THEN CAN I NOT FORGIVE?

NO MATTER THE WHY OR WHEREFORE! I AM GALACTUS! I ANSWER TO NONE!
NO MORE SHALL CONSCIENCE PLAGUE ME!
MY HERALD HAS DARED BETRAY ME! NOW SHALL HE BE BROUGHT TO TASK!
THOUGH THE GAME BE LOATHSOME TO MY SIGHT--THOUGH THE PLAN BE VILE, CONCEIVED IN SHAME--
GALACTUS SHALL NOT BE DENIED!


WHILE, BACK ON THE UNSUSPECTING PLANET EARTH...
I HAVE SOARED O'ER ALL THE SURFACE OF THIS WORLD!
NO LAND MASS OR SEAWAY HAVE I NOT BEHELD!
NEVER HAVE I SEEN SUCH BEAUTY-- SUCH FERTILE PLAINS, SUCH TOWERING PEAKS, SUCH DIVERSITY OF PLACE AND PERSON! HOW RICHLY ENDOWED IT IS, WITH WONDROUS AIR, LUSH, FERTILE SOIL, AND EVERY GIFT THAT NATURE CAN BESTOW!
WHY THEN SUCH NEEDLESS POVERTY-- SUCH POCKETS OF DESPAIR AND PAIN? WHY THEN THE HATE, THE CRIME, THE AGONIES OF FEAR?
BUT, I FORGET! THEY HAVE DWELLED UPON THEIR WORLD FOR SUCH A LITTLE TIME! HAVING ACCOMPLISHED SO MUCH, WHILE STILL IN THEIR INFANCY, WHAT WONDERS WILL THEY CREATE WHEN-- BUT WAIT!
I SENSE ANOTHER! A KINDRED PRESENCE, STRANGE AND IRRESISTIBLY COMPELLING!
SUDDENLY MY HEART FEELS LIGHT, MY SPIRITS SOAR! THE VERY AIR SEEMS TO TINGLE AND GLOW WITH THE ESSENCE OF LIFE-- THE PROMISE OF RAPTURE!
AS GALACTUS PREDICTED-- THE SKY-RIDER IS STIRRED BY MY NEARNESS! LET THE TRAP NOW BE SPRUNG!


AT LAST WE MEET!
I AM ARDINA! THE MOMENT HAS BEEN DECREED-- BY DESTINY!
MY SENSES REEL! YOU ARE-- BEAUTY! BEAUTY BEYOND MEASURE!

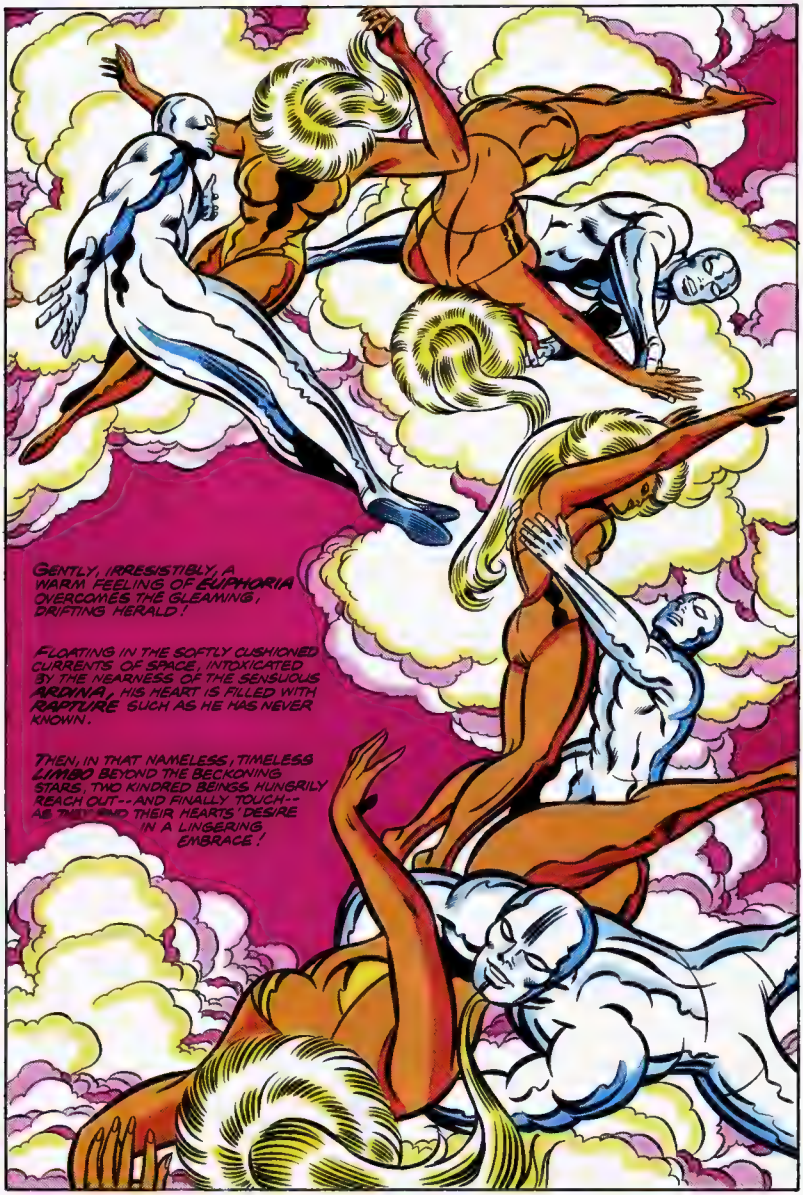

BUT YOU ARE NOT OF EARTH!
I AM SPACE-BORN-- EVEN AS YOU! THAT IS WHY FATE HAS THRUST US TOGETHER!

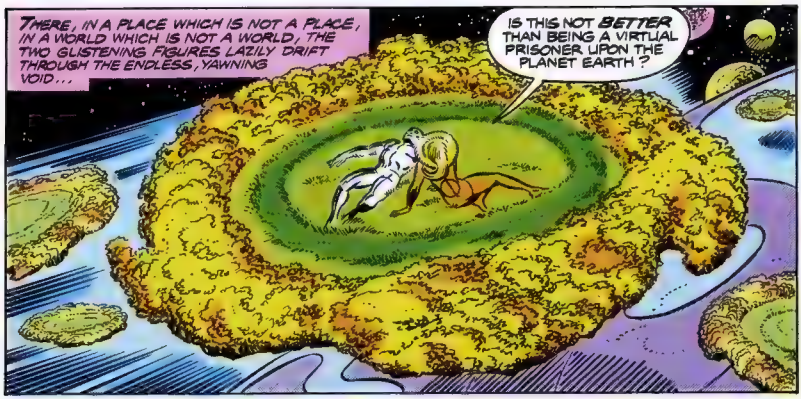

FATE? I WISH IT WERE SO! BUT NO! 'TWAS GALACTUS WHO FOUND ME IN FAR-OFF ZENN-LA, AND WHO CRAFTED ME THUS-- WHO MADE ME THE SILVER SURFER!
AND 'TIS GALACTUS WHO HAS SO FASHIONED YOU! THE MASTER CANNOT DISGUISE HIS ARTISTRY FROM HIS ONCE-AND-FORMER HERALD!
YOUR WORDS RING TRUE, BUT NOW HEAR MINE...

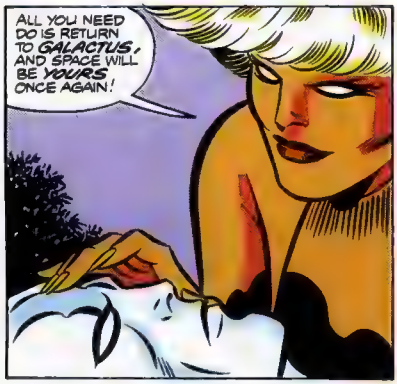
IS NOT GALACTUS HIMSELF NAUGHT BUT A FLICKER IN THE LIGHTSHOW OF LIFE?
EACH OF US MUST PLAY OUT THE ROLE WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN!
NONE OF US CAN TRULY BE MASTER OF OUR FATE!

BUT, I FIND NO WARMTH, NO COMFORT IN SUCH COLD, UN-FEELING WORDS! I AM ARDINA-- I AM A CREATURE OF THE EMOTIONS!
FEEL MY TENDER TOUCH! LET ME ENTER YOUR MIND-- YOUR HEART! TASTE THE PLEASURES I CAN BRING...

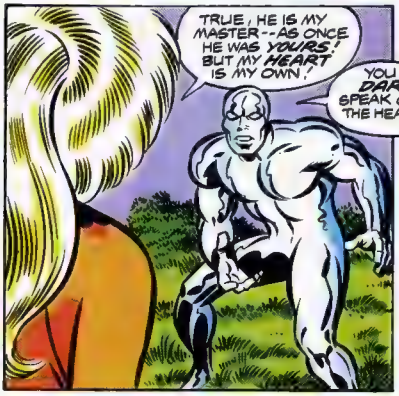
NO SOONER DO THE SOFT, CARESSING FINGERS TOUCH HIS THROBBING BROW, THEN THE SURFER'S EXILE SEEMS TO END AS THE UNFOLDING COSMOS CLAIMS HIM ONCE AGAIN...
THIS IS THE FREEDOM YOU HAVE FORESAKEN!
WITH ME, IT CAN BE YOURS ONCE MORE!
YOURS, THE EVER-GROWING GLORY OF WORLDS WITHOUT END!
THINK OF THE WONDERS WE MIGHT SHARE!
EACH NEW SIGHT, A MIRACLE OF LIFE!
ALL THIS WAS YOURS -- ALL THIS AND MORE!
BUT YOU TASTED IT -- ALONE!
NOW YOU CAN SOAR THE SPACEWAYS ONCE AGAIN--
WITH ARDINA AT YOUR SIDE -- FOREVER!


GENTLY, IRRESISTIBLY, A WARM FEELING OF EUPHORIA OVERCOMES THE GLEAMING, DRIFTING HERALD!
FLOATING IN THE SOFTLY CUSHIONED CURRENTS OF SPACE, INTOXICATED BY THE NEARNESS OF THE SENSUOUS ARDINA, HIS HEART IS FILLED WITH RAPTURE SUCH AS HE HAS NEVER KNOWN.
THEN, IN THAT NAMELESS, TIMELESS LIMBO BEYOND THE BECKONING STARS, TWO KINDRED BEINGS HUNGRILY REACH OUT--AND FINALLY TOUCH--
THEIR HEARTS 'DESIRE
IN A LINGERING
EMBRACE!

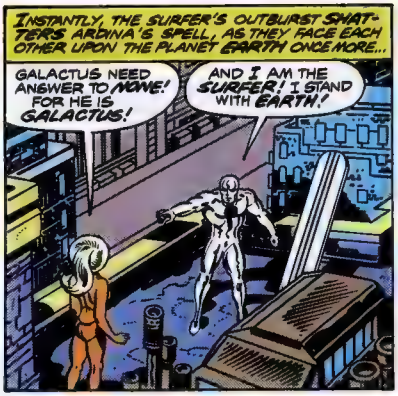

THERE, IN A PLACE WHICH IS NOT A PLACE, IN A WORLD WHICH IS NOT A WORLD, THE TWO GLISTENING FIGURES LAZILY DRIFT THROUGH THE ENDLESS, YAWNING VOID...
IS THIS NOT BETTER THAN BEING A VIRTUAL PRISONER UPON THE PLANET EARTH?

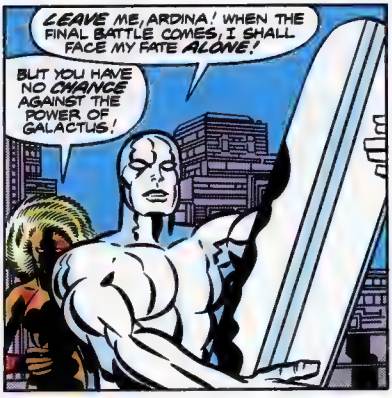

ALL YOU NEED DO IS RETURN TO GALACTUS, AND SPACE WILL BE YOURS ONCE AGAIN!

GALACTUS?!! THEN MY SUSPICION WAS TRUE!
IT IS HE WHOM YOU SERVE! HE SENT YOU TO ME!


TRUE, HE IS MY MASTER--AS ONCE HE WAS YOURS! BUT MY HEART IS MY OWN!
YOU DARE SPEAK OF THE HEART?!!

WHERE IS THE HEART OF HIM WHO WOULD DESTROY A PLANET?!!
WHERE IS THE HEART OF HIM WHO WOULD KILL THREE BILLION SOULS?!!


INSTANTLY, THE SURFER'S OUTBURST SHATTERS ARDINA'S SPELL, AS THEY FACE EACH OTHER UPON THE PLANET EARTH ONCE MORE...
GALACTUS NEED ANSWER TO NONE! FOR HE IS GALACTUS!
AND I AM THE SURFER! I STAND WITH EARTH!


LEAVE ME, ARDINA! WHEN THE FINAL BATTLE COMES, I SHALL FACE MY FATE ALONE!
BUT YOU HAVE NO CHANCE AGAINST THE POWER OF GALACTUS!

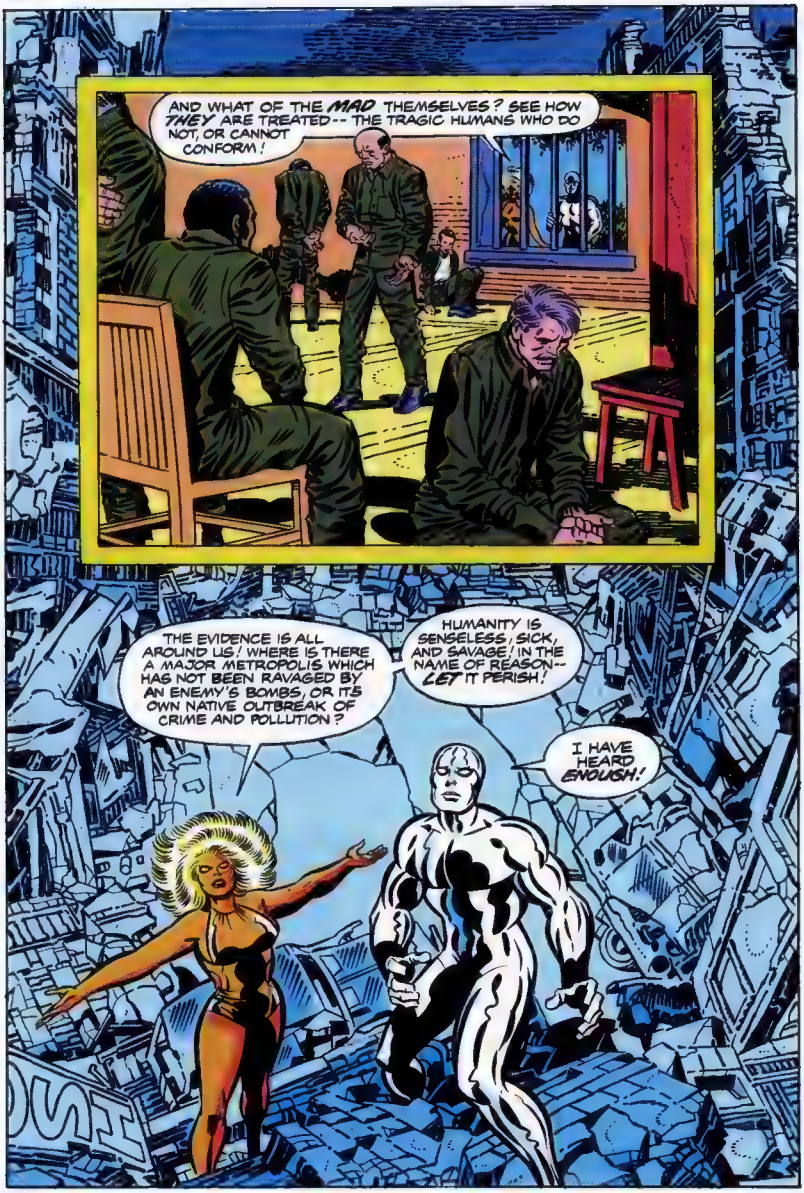
IS A FIGHT TO BE FOUGHT ONLY WHEN VICTORY IS CERTAIN?
I FIGHT THAT MANKIND MAY SURVIVE!

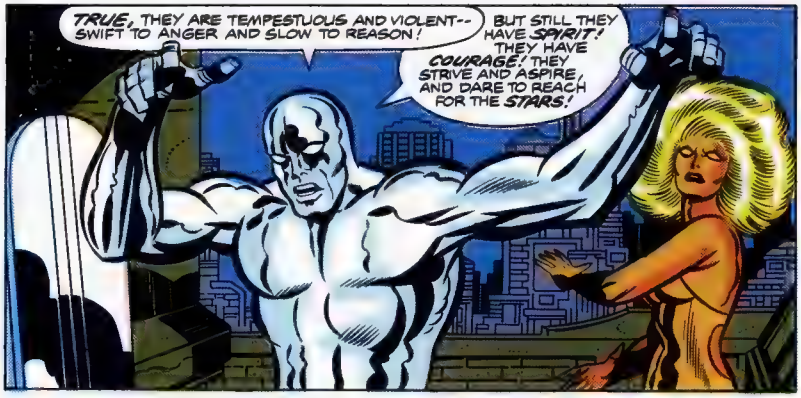
WHAT DO YOU KNOW OF MANKIND? WHAT DO YOU KNOW OF ITS RIGHT TO SURVIVE?
YOU WILL PERISH FOR A WORTHLESS CAUSE!

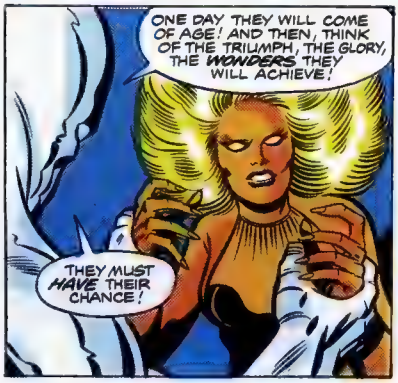
NOT ALL YOUR BEAUTY CAN MATCH THE COLDNESS IN YOUR SOUL!
YOU ARE WRONG! I DO BUT SEE THINGS AS THEY ARE--AND SO SHALL YOU!

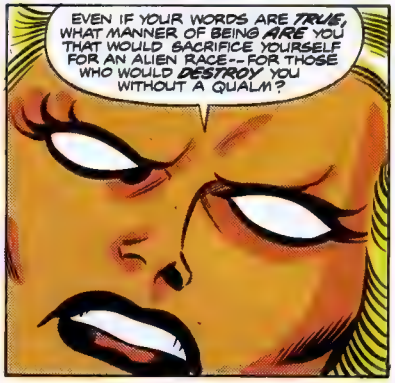
FACE ME, HERALD! ACCEPT THE TOUCH OF MY HAND! NOW SEE THE TRUE NATURE OF THOSE YOU WOULD PROTECT!
LET YOUR MIND RELAX! I SHALL BE YOUR EYES!

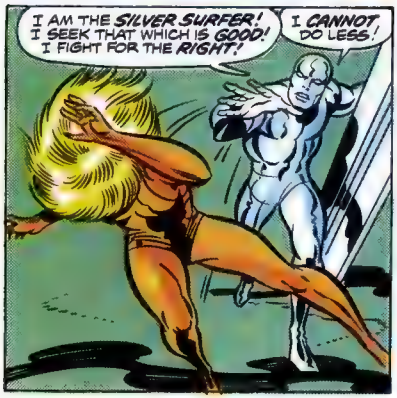
ONCE AGAIN, THROUGH THE UNEARTHLY PROWESS OF ARDINA, THE REALITY OF HERE AND NOW SEEMS TO FADE INTO A JARRING KALEIDOSCOPE OF BRUTAL IMAGES, A MORBID MONTAGE OF HEART-RENDING SCENES FILLED WITH CARNAGE AND STRIFE--MADE ALL THE MORE VIVID BECAUSE--THEY ARE TRUE!
NOW SEE HUMANITY FOR WHAT IT REALLY IS--A RACE OF SENTIENT SAVAGES, EVER DIVIDED INTO THE OPPRESSORS AND THE OPPRESSED!
THOUGH THEY WEAR THE VENEER OF CIVILIZATION, DO BUT SCRATCH THE SURFACE AND THEIR TRUE BESTIALITY BREAKS THROUGH!
CERTAINLY THEIR MOST PRECIOUS POSSESSIONS ARE THEIR ALL-TOO-BRIEF LIVES! YET, THEY TREAT HUMAN LIFE WITH A CONTEMPT THAT BORDERS ON MADNESS!


AND WHAT OF THE MAD THEMSELVES? SEE HOW THEY ARE TREATED -- THE TRAGIC HUMANS WHO DO NOT, OR CANNOT CONFORM!
THE EVIDENCE IS ALL AROUND US! WHERE IS THERE A MAJOR METROPOLIS WHICH HAS NOT BEEN RAVAGED BY AN ENEMY'S BOMBS, OR ITS OWN NATIVE OUTBREAK OF CRIME AND POLLUTION?
HUMANITY IS SENSELESS, SICK, AND SAVAGE! IN THE NAME OF REASON-- LET IT PERISH!
I HAVE HEARD ENOUGH!


TRUE, THEY ARE TEMPESTUOUS AND VIOLENT-- SWIFT TO ANGER AND SLOW TO REASON!
BUT STILL THEY HAVE SPIRIT! THEY HAVE COURAGE! THEY STRIVE AND ASPIRE, AND DARE TO REACH FOR THE STARS!

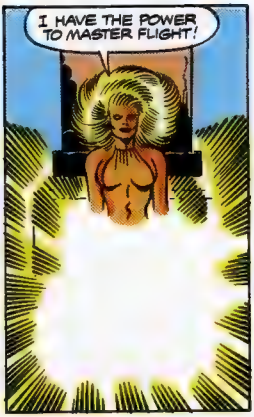

ONE DAY THEY WILL COME OF AGE! AND THEN, THINK OF THE TRIUMPH, THE GLORY, THE WONDERS THEY WILL ACHIEVE!
THEY MUST HAVE THEIR CHANCE!


EVEN IF YOUR WORDS ARE TRUE, WHAT MANNER OF BEING ARE YOU THAT WOULD SACRIFICE YOURSELF FOR AN ALIEN RACE--FOR THOSE WHO WOULD DESTROY YOU WITHOUT A QUALM?

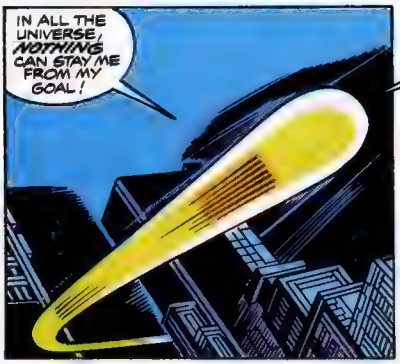

I AM THE SILVER SURFER! I SEEK THAT WHICH IS GOOD! I FIGHT FOR THE RIGHT!
I CANNOT DO LESS!

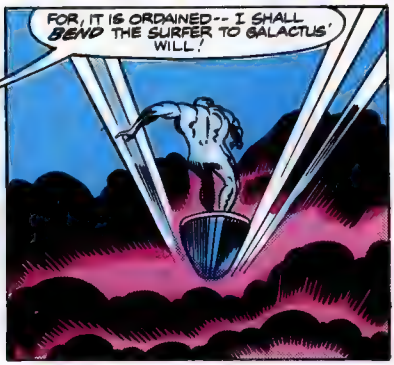
YOU SEE LIFE AS IT IS! I'LL SHOW YOU WHAT IT CAN BE!
FLY THEN! WHEREVER YOU GO, I WILL FOLLOW!

ARDINA NEEDS NO SOARING BOARD!


I HAVE THE POWER TO MASTER FLIGHT!

THE POWER TO TRANSCEND DISTANCE!


IN ALL THE UNIVERSE, NOTHING CAN STAY ME FROM MY GOAL!


FOR, IT IS ORDAINED-- I SHALL BEND THE SURFER TO GALACTUS' WILL!

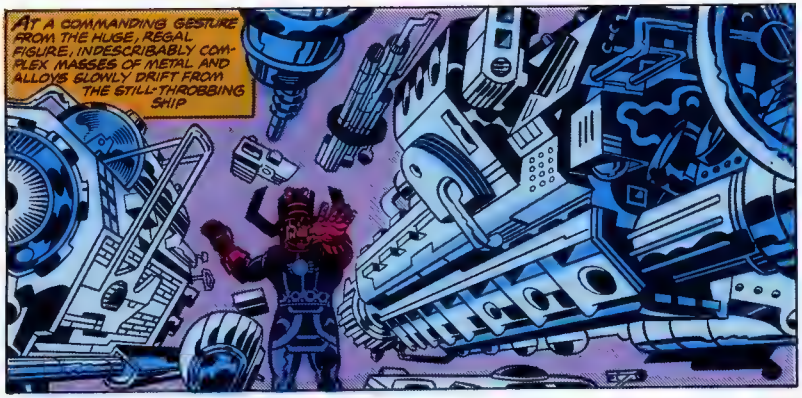
SOAR WHERE YOU MAY, NOBLE SKY-RIDER--

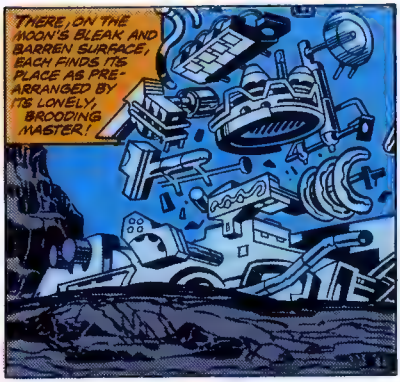
YOU SHALL NEVER CREST THE CURRENTS OF SPACE BUT ARDINA WILL BE THERE!

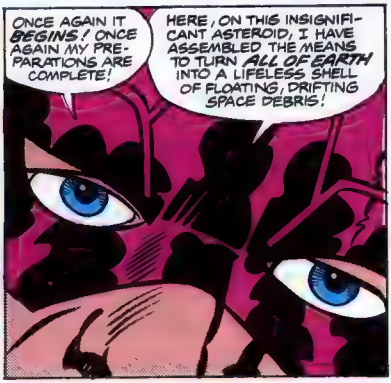
AT THAT VERY MOMENT, EFFORTLESSLY PLUMMETING TOWARDS THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON, A GIGANTIC SPACE VEHICLE PREPARES FOR A SILENT, FATEFUL LANDING...

SMOOTHLY, POWERFULLY, AWESOMELY IT DESCENDS, AS MIGHTY FORCES FAR BEYOND HUMAN COMPREHENSION UNERRINGLY GUIDE THE MAMMOTH CRAFT...

THEN, ALL IS STILL! ONLY A GROWING SURGE OF THROBBING POWER SEEMS TO ANNOUNCE -- GALACTUS HAS COME!

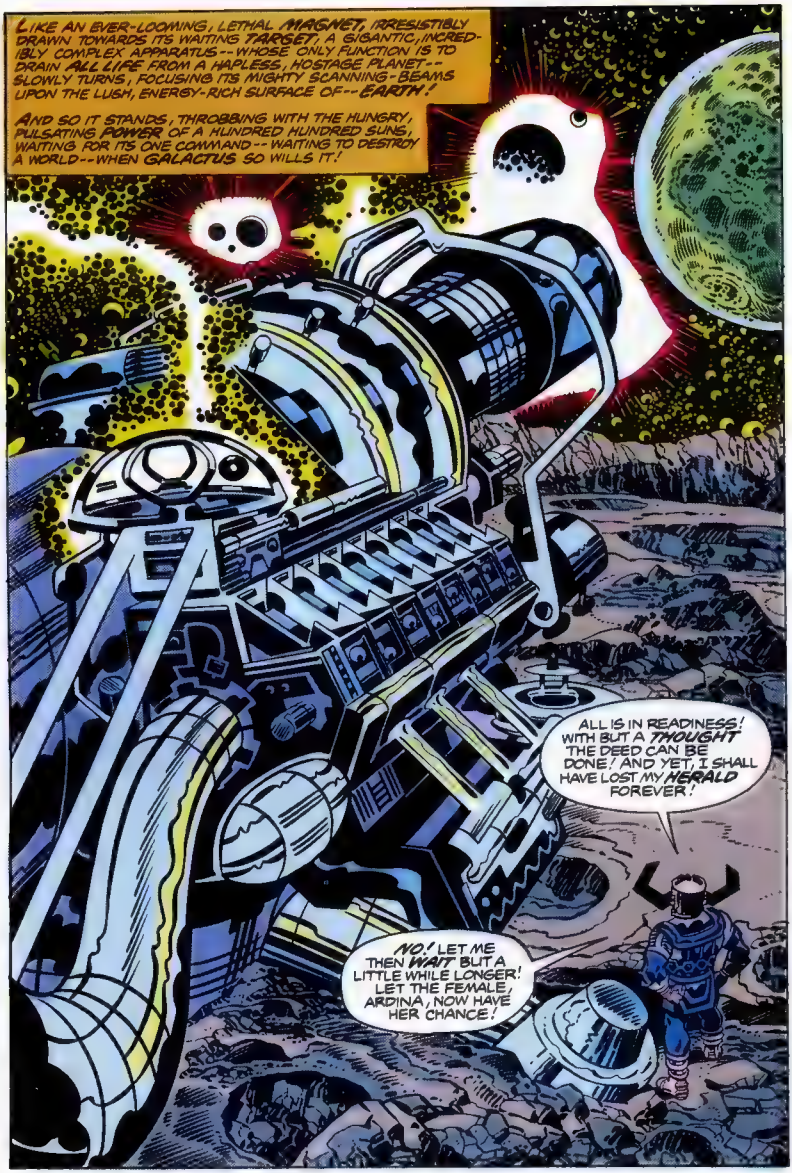

AT A COMMANDING GESTURE FROM THE HUGE, REGAL FIGURE, INDESCRIBABLY COMPLEX MASSES OF METAL AND ALLOYS SLOWLY DRIFT FROM THE STILL-THROBBING SHIP


THERE, ON THE MOON'S BLEAK AND BARREN SURFACE, EACH FINDS ITS PLACE AS PRE-ARRANGED BY ITS LONELY, BROODING MASTER!


ONCE AGAIN IT BEGINS! ONCE AGAIN MY PREPARATIONS ARE COMPLETE!
HERE, ON THIS INSIGNIFICANT ASTEROID, I HAVE ASSEMBLED THE MEANS TO TURN ALL OF EARTH INTO A LIFELESS SHELL OF FLOATING, DRIFTING SPACE DEBRIS!

LET ME DESCEND TO THE SURFACE OF THE MOON!
THERE, I SHALL SENSE THE FEEL OF NATURAL MATTER CRUSHED BENEATH MY FEET!

TOO LONG HAVE I LINGERED IN THIS MEANINGLESS CORNER OF THE GALAXY!
TOO LONG HAS MY HERALD THWARTED MY WILL!


LIKE AN EVER-LOOMING, LETHAL MAGNET, IRRESISTIBLY DRAWN TOWARDS ITS WAITING TARGET, A GIGANTIC, INCREDIBLY COMPLEX APPARATUS--WHOSE ONLY FUNCTION IS TO DRAIN ALL LIFE FROM A HAPLESS, HOSTAGE PLANET--SLOWLY TURNS, FOCUSING ITS MIGHTY SCANNING-BEAMS UPON THE LUSH, ENERGY-RICH SURFACE OF--EARTH!
AND SO IT STANDS, THROBBING WITH THE HUNGRY, PULSATING POWER OF A HUNDRED HUNDRED SUNS, WAITING FOR ITS ONE COMMAND--WAITING TO DESTROY A WORLD--WHEN GALACTUS SO WILLS IT!
ALL IS IN READINESS! WITH BUT A THOUGHT THE DEED CAN BE DONE! AND YET, I SHALL HAVE LOST MY HERALD FOREVER!
NO! LET ME THEN WAIT BUT A LITTLE WHILE LONGER! LET THE FEMALE, ARDINA, NOW HAVE HER CHANCE!

THEN, AS THE GARGANTUAN, BROODING FIGURE STANDS LOST IN THOUGHT...
WHY DO YOU HESITATE, LORD?
WELL DO I KNOW THE LOATHING YOU FEEL FOR THE SUN-SPRINKLED SPHERE WHICH SPINS HELPLESSLY BEFORE YOU!

NOT SO, MASTER OF GUILE!
ONLY THE WEAK MAY SAVOR HATRED! I, WHO AM POWER, HAVE NO NEED TO HATE! I AM ABOVE MORTAL LOATHING!
YOU DO BUT PLAY WITH WORDS, LORD!

DO WE BOTH NOT KNOW YOU MERELY DESTROY THAT WHICH DISPLEASES YOU!
JUST AS YOU SHALL DO TO EARTH!

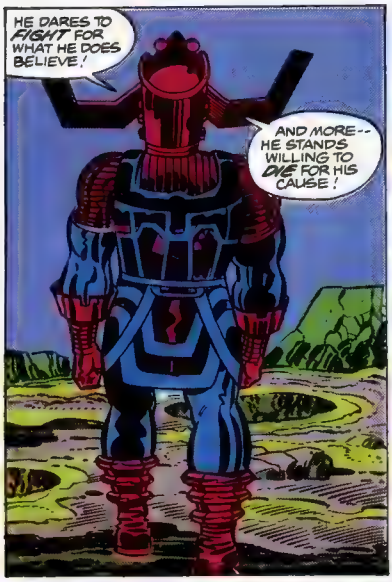
AND YET, THOUGH VIRTUAL OMNI-POTENCE IS MINE, THERE IS ONE I CANNOT SUBDUE!
I, WHO CAN SLAY HIM WITH A THOUGHT, CANNOT BEND HIM TO MY WILL!
THE SURFER!

EVEN AS WE SPEAK, IS NOT FAIR ARDINA AT HIS SIDE?
BE YOU PATIENT, LORD! SHE WILL WIN HIM TO YOUR CAUSE!
AND IF SHE FAILS?

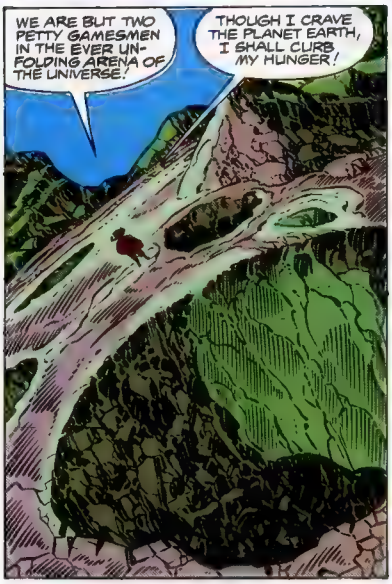
THEN SHOW HIM NO MERCY! KILL HIM, I SAY, AS ONLY GALACTUS CAN!

REGARD ME, LORD! REGARD YOUR FAITHFUL VASSAL, YOUR MASTER OF GUILE! HAVE I NOT SERVED YOU WITHOUT LET? HAVE I NOT FROWNED WHEN YOU WISHED IT, FOUGHT WHEN YOU COMMANDED? AM I NOT THE PERFECT SERVITOR?

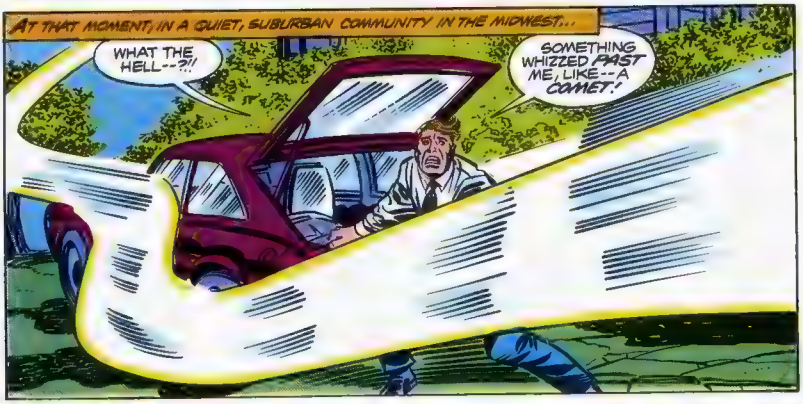
SLAY THE SILVER SURFER! PUT AN END TO HIM WHO DARES DEFY YOU! LET ME THEN BE YOUR HERALD! HEAR ME, LORD! HEAR THE VOICE OF BLIND DEVOTION! I LIVE ONLY TO OBEY!

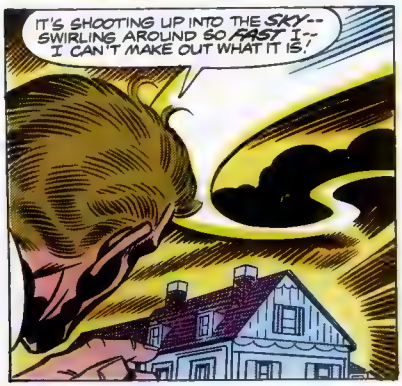

HE DARES TO FIGHT FOR WHAT HE DOES BELIEVE!
AND MORE-- HE STANDS WILLING TO DIE FOR HIS CAUSE!

IF I WERE IN HIS PLACE, WOULD THE VALOR OF GALACTUS PROVE EQUAL TO HIS?


WE ARE BUT TWO PETTY GAMESMEN IN THE EVER UN-FOLDING ARENA OF THE UNIVERSE!
THOUGH I CRAVE THE PLANET EARTH, I SHALL CURB MY HUNGER!

LET THE GAME PLAY ON! GALACTUS SHALL SEE IT THROUGH-- TILL THE END!

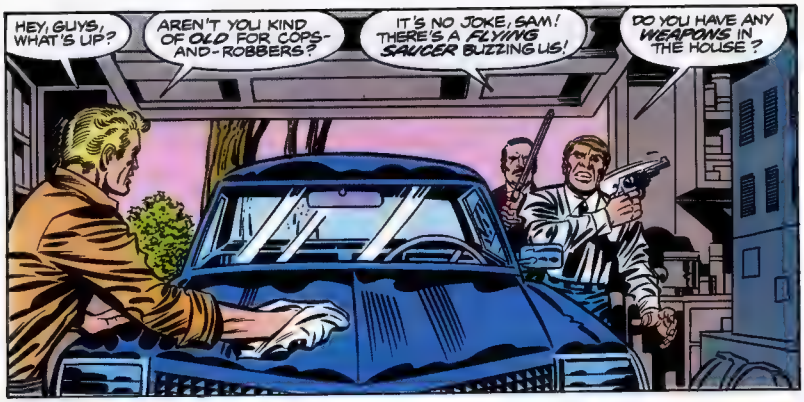

AT THAT MOMENT, IN A QUIET, SUBURBAN COMMUNITY IN THE MIDWEST...
WHAT THE HELL--?!!
SOMETHING WHIZZED PAST ME, LIKE--A COMET!


IT'S SHOOTING UP INTO THE SKY--SWIRLING AROUND SO FAST I--I CAN'T MAKE OUT WHAT IT IS!

IT'S GOTTA BE A FLYING SAUCER!
BUT--WHY'S IT CIRCLING AROUND HERE?
I'LL GRAB MY GUN--AND WARN THE NEIGHBORHOOD!

THERE'S LINDSTROM, RUNNING TOWARDS ME WITH A RIFLE!
HE MUST'A SEEN IT, TOO!

WHAT WAS IT, COSGROVE? WHAT WAS IT?
I DUNNO! C'MON, LET'S FIND KEMPERER!
WE NEED EVERY MAN WE CAN GET!


HEY, GUYS, WHAT'S UP?
AREN'T YOU KIND OF OLD FOR COPS-AND-ROBBERS?
IT'S NO JOKE, SAM! THERE'S A FLYING SAUCER BUZZING US!
DO YOU HAVE ANY WEAPONS IN THE HOUSE?

WELL, THERE'S AN OLD FLYSWATTER AROUND SOMEWHERE, BUT BETH SAID IT'S OUT OF AMMO!
DIDN'T YOU HEAR US, SAM? THIS IS FOR REAL!

IT IS? THEN I'D BETTER GET TWO FLY SWATTERS!
YOU ALWAYS WERE A SMARTASS, KEMPERER! IT'S GUYS LIKE YOU THAT WOULD SELL THIS COUNTRY DOWN THE RIVER!

YOU TWO ARE RIGHT OUT OF LAUREL AND HARDY, RUNNING AROUND WITH THOSE POP-GUNS LIKE THAT!
C'MON, COSGROVE! THEY COULD BE RAPING AND LOOTING WHILE WE STAND HERE!
I DON'T KNOW IF YOU'RE CHICKEN, OR JUST PLAIN STUPID, MISTER--
BUT WHEN THOSE LOUSY ALIENS ATTACK YOUR HOUSE, DON'T CALL US!

HEY, TELL ME, MEN-- IF IT REALLY IS AN INVASION FROM OUTER SPACE, WHAT GOOD'LL YOU DO WITH THOSE OVERGROWN CAP PISTOLS?
I ALWAYS KNEW YOU WERE A COMMIE!

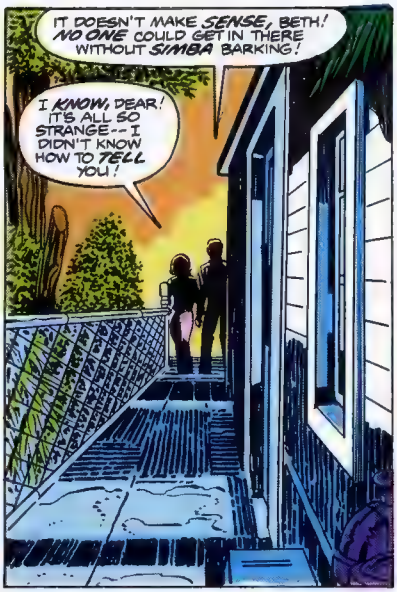
BE CAREFUL, HEAR? SHOOT ANY STRAY PUPPIES OR KITTENS WHILE YOU'RE SAVING THE WORLD, AND I'LL SHOVE THOSE PEA-SHOOTERS--
SAM! WHAT'S WRONG? WHAT IS IT?

WHO WERE YOU SHOUTING AT?
AW, IT'S NOTHING, BETH! NICK COSGROVE AND ARTHUR LINDSTROM THINK THEY SAW A FLYING SAUCER!

THEY'RE RUNNIN' AROUND LIKE HALF-BAKED VIGILANTES!
THEY--MAY NOT BE--SO FAR OFF-BASE!
IT'S THE MOST FUN THEY'VE HAD SINCE THE MASSAGE PARLOR BURNED DOWN!
HUH?

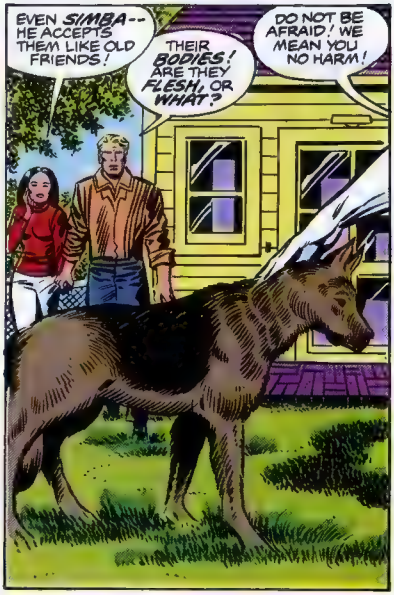
I WAS COMING OUT TO TELL YOU, SAM-- I'VE SEEN SOMETHING, TOO!
YOU HAVE? LIKE WHAT? WHEN? WHAT DO YOU MEAN, HONEY?

I'M NOT SURE! I THINK IT WAS TWO FIGURES-- BATHED IN SOME SORT OF GLEAMING, SILVER LIGHT!
THEY WERE JUST IN OUR-- BACK YARD!
COME-- I'LL SHOW YOU!

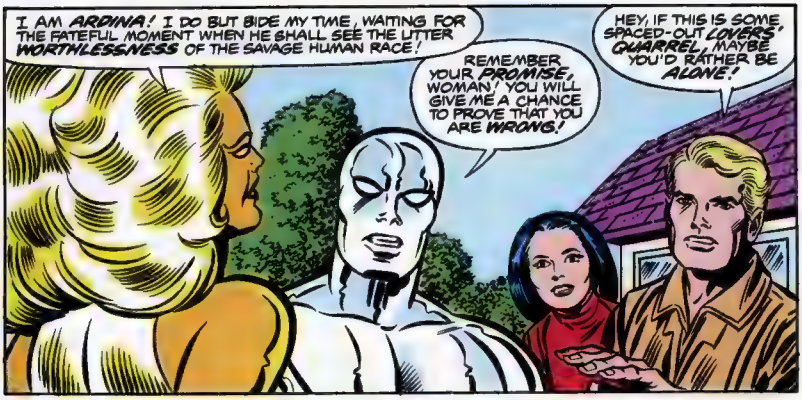

IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE, BETH! NO ONE COULD GET IN THERE WITHOUT SIMBA BARKING!
I KNOW, DEAR! IT'S ALL SO STRANGE -- I DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO TELL YOU!

THERE! THAT'S WHAT I MEAN! THAT'S THE LIGHT THAT WAS SURROUNDING THEM!
SURROUNDING WHO? IT'S SO BRIGHT-- I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING!

LOOK! THE LIGHT IS FADING! NOW-- NOW YOU CAN SEE THEM!
STRANGE, I FEEL NO FEAR! THERE'S AN AURA OF PEACE ABOUT THEM!
THEN I WAS RIGHT! AT FIRST-- I THOUGHT I MUST BE DREAMING!

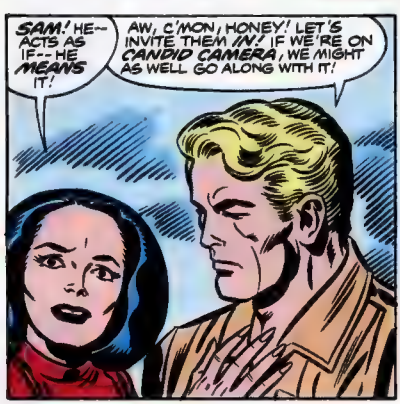

EVEN SIMBA-- HE ACCEPTS THEM LIKE OLD FRIENDS!
THEIR BODIES! ARE THEY FLESH, OR WHAT?
DO NOT BE AFRAID! WE MEAN YOU NO HARM!

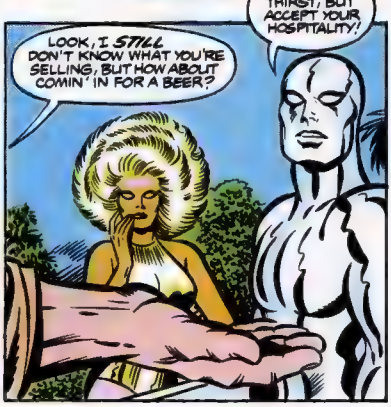
WHO ARE YOU? WHERE ARE YOU FROM? AND--WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
I AM CALLED--THE SILVER SURFER! I COME FROM THE FAR DISTANT PLANET, ZENN-LA--BEYOND THE REMOTEST STAR IN ALL YOUR GALAXY!
MY PURPOSE--MAY BE TOO ESOTERIC FOR YOUR COMPREHENSION!
SOMEHOW, THE WAY HE SAYS IT--IT SOUNDS ALMOST PLAUSIBLE!


I AM ARDINA! I DO BUT BIDE MY TIME, WAITING FOR THE FATEFUL MOMENT WHEN HE SHALL SEE THE UTTER WORTHLESSNESS OF THE SAVAGE HUMAN RACE!
REMEMBER YOUR PROMISE, WOMAN! YOU WILL GIVE ME A CHANCE TO PROVE THAT YOU ARE WRONG!
HEY, IF THIS IS SOME SPACED-OUT LOVERS' QUARREL, MAYBE YOU'D RATHER BE ALONE!

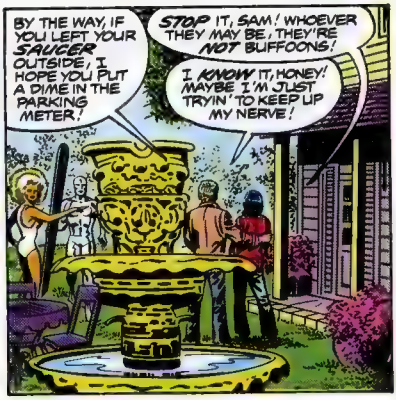
ANYWAY, IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO TAKE OFF YOUR COSTUMES, AND LET US IN ON THE GAG!
DO NOT TREAT THIS LIGHTLY, HUMAN!

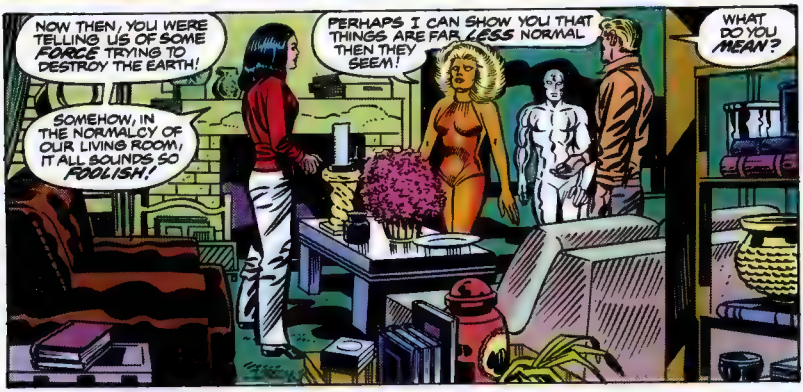
THERE IS A FORCE, FAR BEYOND YOUR MORTAL KEN -- WAITING TO DESTROY THIS WORLD, AND ALL WHO DWELL THEREON!
THAT WHICH WE NOW SAY AND DO MAY AFFECT THE DESTINY, THE VERY LIVES OF THE ENTIRE HUMAN RACE!

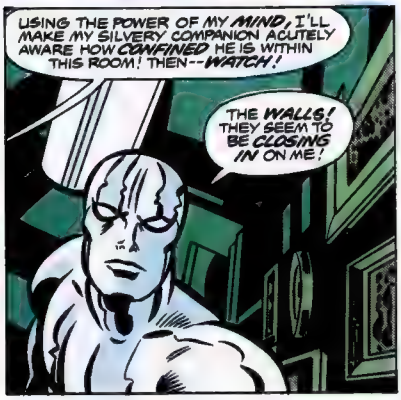

SAM! HE-- ACTS AS IF-- HE MEANS IT!
AW, C'MON, HONEY! LET'S INVITE THEM IN! IF WE'RE ON CANDID CAMERA, WE MIGHT AS WELL GO ALONG WITH IT!

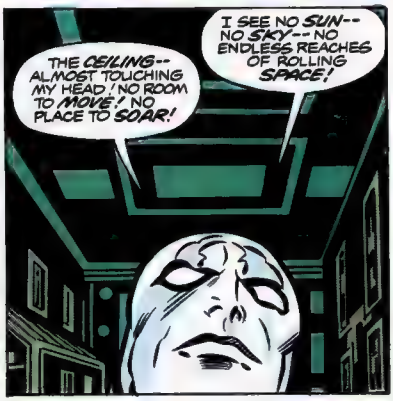

I HAVE NO THIRST, BUT ACCEPT YOUR HOSPITALITY!
LOOK, I STILL DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SELLING, BUT HOW ABOUT COMIN' IN FOR A BEER?

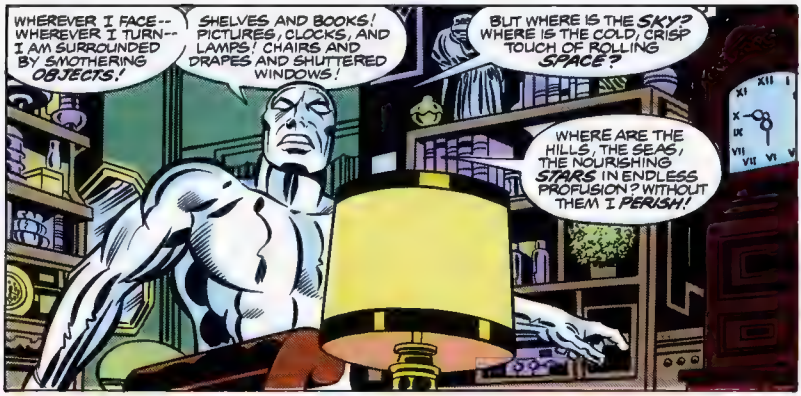
DO YOU NOT SEE HOW HOPELESS IT IS? EVEN THOSE YOU WOULD SAVE MUST THINK YOU MAD!
NOTHING IS HOPELESS WHILE LIFE ENDURES!

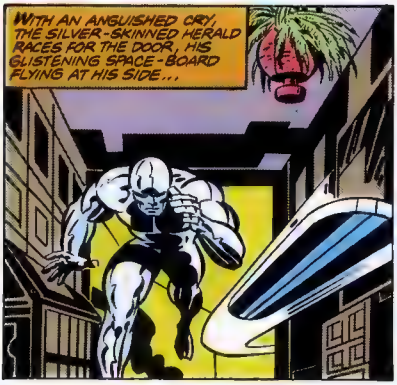

BY THE WAY, IF YOU LEFT YOUR SAUCER OUTSIDE, I HOPE YOU PUT A DIME IN THE PARKING METER!
STOP IT, SAM! WHOEVER THEY MAY BE, THEY'RE NOT BUFFOONS!
I KNOW IT, HONEY! MAYBE I'M JUST TRYIN' TO KEEP UP MY NERVE!

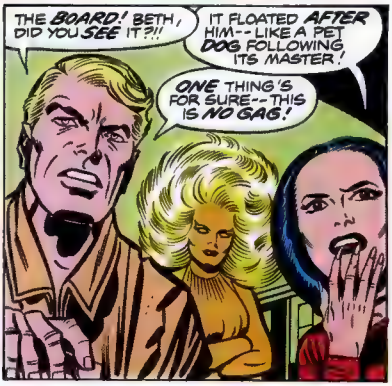

NOW THEN, YOU WERE TELLING US OF SOME FORCE TRYING TO DESTROY THE EARTH!
SOMEHOW, IN THE NORMALCY OF OUR LIVING ROOM, IT ALL SOUNDS SO FOOLISH!
PERHAPS I CAN SHOW YOU THAT THINGS ARE FAR LESS NORMAL THEN THEY SEEM!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?


USING THE POWER OF MY MIND, I'LL MAKE MY SILVERY COMPANION ACUTELY AWARE HOW CONFINED HE IS WITHIN THIS ROOM! THEN--WATCH!
THE WALLS! THEY SEEM TO BE CLOSING IN ON ME!

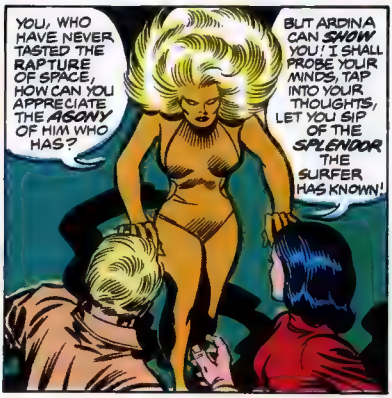

THE CEILING--ALMOST TOUCHING MY HEAD! NO ROOM TO MOVE! NO PLACE TO SOAR!
I SEE NO SUN--NO SKY--NO ENDLESS REACHES OF ROLLING SPACE!


WHEREVER I FACE-- WHEREVER I TURN-- I AM SURROUNDED BY SMOTHERING OBJECTS!
SHELVES AND BOOKS! PICTURES, CLOCKS, AND LAMPS! CHAIRS AND DRAPES AND SHUTTERED WINDOWS!
BUT WHERE IS THE SKY? WHERE IS THE COLD, CRISP TOUCH OF ROLLING SPACE?
WHERE ARE THE HILLS, THE SEAS, THE NOURISHING STARS IN ENDLESS PROFUSION? WITHOUT THEM I PERISH!


WITH AN ANGUISHED CRY, THE SILVER-SKINNED HERALD RACES FOR THE DOOR, HIS GLISTENING SPACE-BOARD FLYING AT HIS SIDE...


THE BOARD! BETH, DID YOU SEE IT?!!
IT FLOATED AFTER HIM--LIKE A PET DOG FOLLOWING ITS MASTER!
ONE THING'S FOR SURE--THIS IS NO GAG!

"THIS IS NO GAG!" HOW SHALLOW THAT PHRASE! HOW LITTLE YOU COMPREHEND THE MAGNITUDE OF WHAT YOU HAVE BEHELD!


YOU, WHO HAVE NEVER TASTED THE RAPTURE OF SPACE, HOW CAN YOU APPRECIATE THE AGONY OF HIM WHO HAS?
BUT ARDINA CAN SHOW YOU! I SHALL PROBE YOUR MINDS, TAP INTO YOUR THOUGHTS, LET YOU SIP OF THE SPLENDOR THE SURFER HAS KNOWN!

THIS IS BUT THE *SMALLEST PART* OF THE YAWNING COSMOS THAT IS *HOME* TO THE SILVERY SKY-RIDER!

IT IS *HERE* HE CAN PLUMMET, FLOAT, AND GLIDE-- FREE AND UNFETTERED-- AS HE SOARS AMONGST THE BECKONING STARS!

BEHOLD WHAT HE HAS FORSAKEN! A BIRTHRIGHT OF COSMIC *GRANDEUR!* A LIFE OF ENDLESS *WONDER!* FOREVER *ABANDONED*-- FOR THE SAKE OF SUCH AS *YOU!*

NOT EVEN *I*, WHO COULD BE *ALL THINGS* TO SUCH AS HE, CAN SWERVE HIM FROM HIS GOAL!

BUT, SURELY YOU HAVE SEEN *ENOUGH!* AND SO LET US *RETURN*--

IN THE SPACE OF A SINGLE HEARTBEAT...

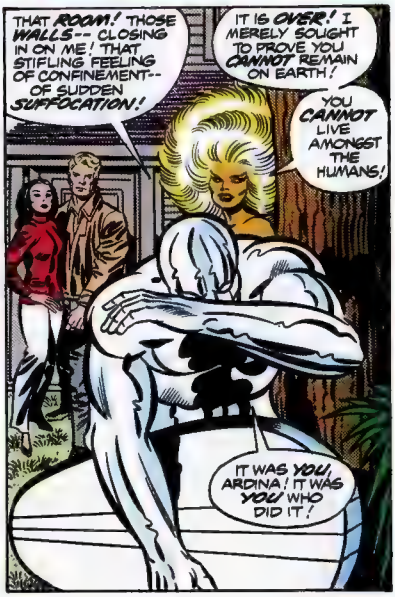
I SEE YOU SCOFF NO LONGER!

EASY, HONEY-- EASY! IT'S *OVER* NOW!

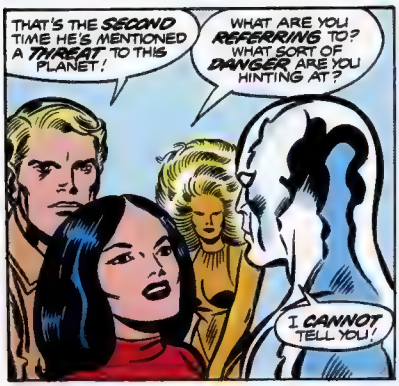
IT WAS-- SOME FORM OF HYPNOSIS, RIGHT? IT-- IT MUST BE!
BUT-- IT SEEMED SO REAL!
IT WAS REAL! BUT ALL I CAN SAY IS-- FEW MEN HAVE SACRIFICED MORE FOR MANKIND THAN-- THE SILVER SURFER!

SAM, IN SOME CRAZY WAY-- I FIND MYSELF BELIEVING THIS!
ME TOO, HONEY! IT'S TOO FAR-OUT TO BE YOUR AVERAGE CON JOB!
ANYWAY, WHO'D GO TO ALL THIS TROUBLE? WHAT COULD THEY BE AFTER?

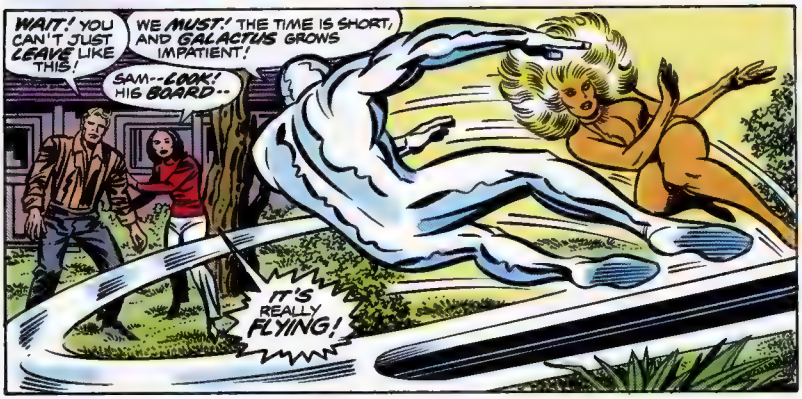
THE ONE SHE CALLED SILVER SURFER-- HE MUST STILL BE OUTSIDE!
HE STILL MAY BE IN A STATE OF TRAUMA, CAUSED BY SEVERE PSYCHIC SHOCK!
LET'S FIND HIM! MIGHT AS WELL SEE THIS THROUGH TO THE END!

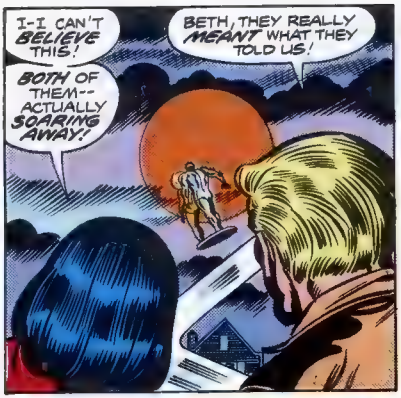

THAT ROOM! THOSE WALLS-- CLOSING IN ON ME! THAT STIFLING FEELING OF CONFINEMENT-- OF SUDDEN SUFFOCATION!
IT IS OVER! I MERELY SOUGHT TO PROVE YOU CANNOT REMAIN ON EARTH!
YOU CANNOT LIVE AMONGST THE HUMANS!
IT WAS YOU, ARDINA! IT WAS YOU WHO DID IT!

DON'T YOU SEE? I HAD TO DO IT! I HAD TO MAKE YOU REALIZE-- YOUR PLACE IS OUT THERE, OUT AMONG THE STARS-- WHERE THE SKY TRAILS NEVER END!
THAT'S WHERE YOU BELONG-- CRESTING THE CURRENTS OF SPACE-- WITH GALACTUS!
NEVER! THOUGH EVERY FIBER OF MY BEING YEARNS FOR THE FREEDOM OF THE COSMOS-- NEVER-- IF IT MEANS THE END OF EARTH!

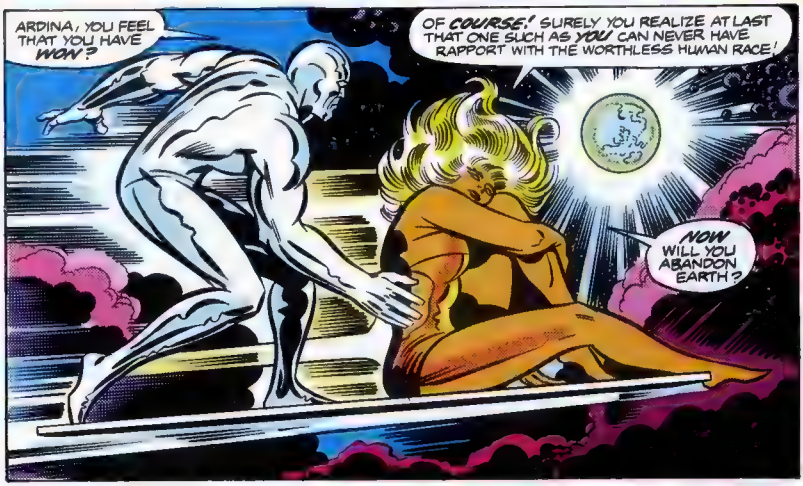

THAT'S THE SECOND TIME HE'S MENTIONED A THREAT TO THIS PLANET!
WHAT ARE YOU REFERRING TO? WHAT SORT OF DANGER ARE YOU HINTING AT?
I CANNOT TELL YOU!

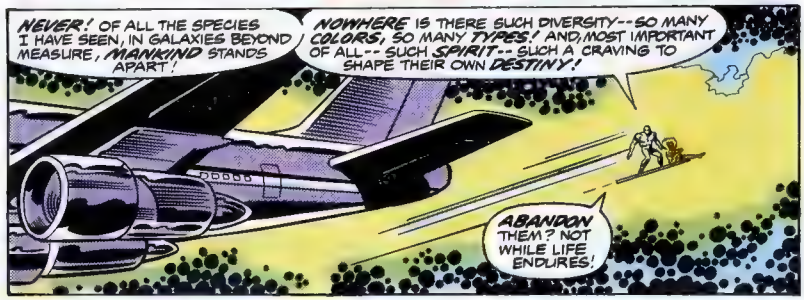
LOOK, I THINK THIS HAS GONE FAR ENOUGH!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOUR GAME IS, OR HOW YOU AND THE LADY DO THOSE STUNTS OF YOURS, BUT--
IT'S NO USE! HOW CAN I DESCRIBE GALACTUS? HOW CAN I SPEAK OF HIM WHO MUST DRAIN ALL LIFE FROM A HOSTAGE WORLD SO THAT HE HIMSELF MAY LIVE?


WAIT! YOU CAN'T JUST LEAVE LIKE THIS!
WE MUST! THE TIME IS SHORT, AND GALACTUS GROWS IMPATIENT!
SAM--LOOK! HIS BOARD--
IT'S REALLY FLYING!


I-I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS!
BETH, THEY REALLY MEANT WHAT THEY TOLD US!
BOTH OF THEM-- ACTUALLY SOARING AWAY!

GOD HELP US! I HAVE THE FEELING THERE IS SOMEONE, OR SOMETHING, OUT THERE-- WATCHING-- WAITING--
WITH ONLY THE SILVER SURFER STANDING BETWEEN IT-- AND US!


ARDINA, YOU FEEL THAT YOU HAVE WON?
OF COURSE! SURELY YOU REALIZE AT LAST THAT ONE SUCH AS YOU CAN NEVER HAVE RAPPORT WITH THE WORTHLESS HUMAN RACE!
NOW WILL YOU ABANDON EARTH?

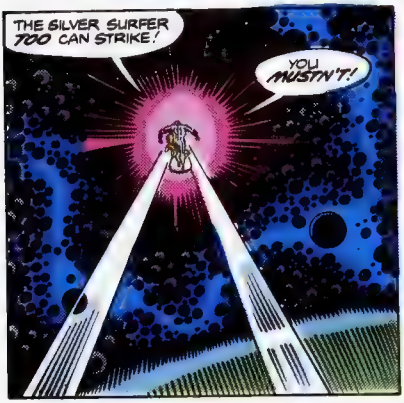

NEVER! OF ALL THE SPECIES I HAVE SEEN, IN GALAXIES BEYOND MEASURE, MANKIND STANDS APART!
NOWHERE IS THERE SUCH DIVERSITY--SO MANY COLORS, SO MANY TYPES! AND, MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL-- SUCH SPIRIT-- SUCH A CRAVING TO SHAPE THEIR OWN DESTINY!
ABANDON THEM? NOT WHILE LIFE ENDURES!

BUT YOU ARE NO MATCH FOR GALACTUS! YOU WILL CERTAINLY DIE!
IS LIFE WITHOUT HONOR BETTER THAN DEATH FOR A CAUSE?

WHAT MANNER OF MADMAN ARE YOU? SERVE GALACTUS, AND THE COSMOS IS YOURS-- AND I AS WELL! DEFY HIM, AND YOU LOSE ALL!
WHY DO YOU STARE SO? WHY DO YOU NOT SPEAK?

THE TIME FOR TALK IS PAST!
OUT THERE IS GALACTUS! AND HERE AM I--STILL POSSESSED OF THE POWER COSMIC!

I'LL WAIT NO LONGER FOR HIS ATTACK!
NO!

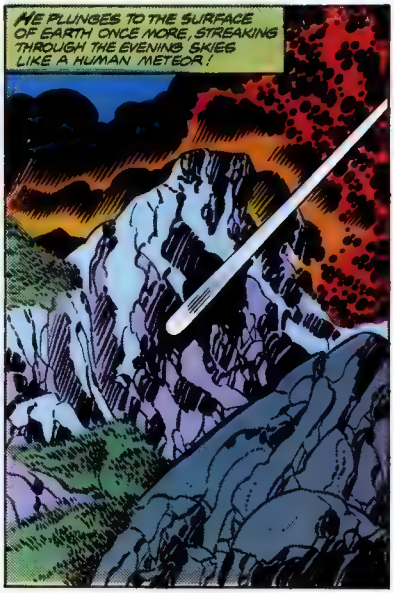

THE SILVER SURFER TOO CAN STRIKE!
YOU MUSTN'T!

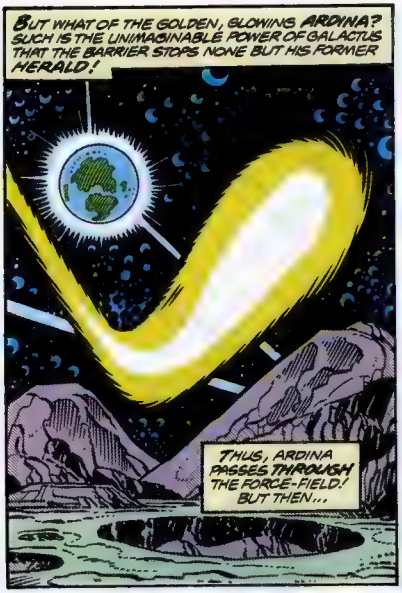
ZZAZK!
THE BARRIER! YOU HAVE FORGOTTEN THE BARRIER!

INSTANTANEOUSLY, THE SURFER'S MISSILE-SWIFT THRUST IS BROKEN BY AN UNSEEN WALL OF INDESCRIBABLE FORCE...
BUT ONLY AFTER HIS OWN INCALCULABLE POWER HAS FORCED HIM HALF-WAY THROUGH THE INVISIBLE BARRIER!

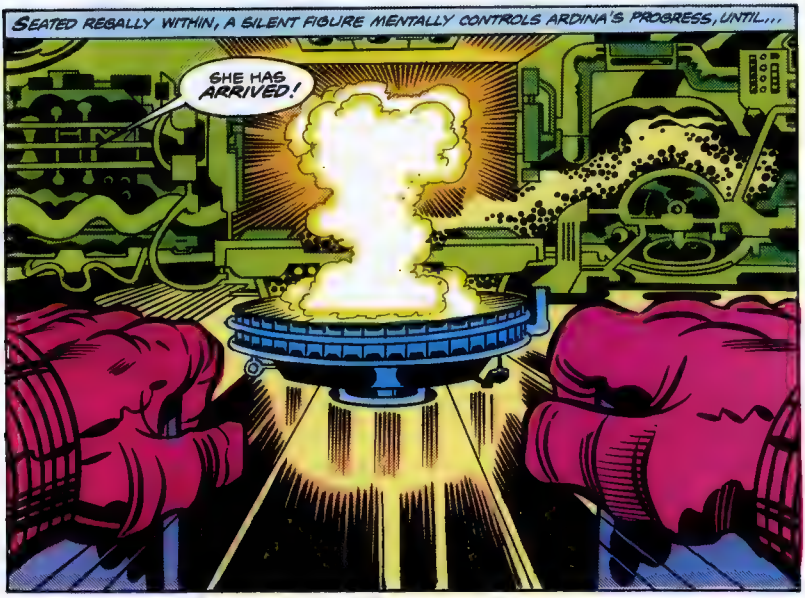
THEN, MERCILESSLY EXERTING A PRE-PROGRAMMED FORCE, STRONG ENOUGH TO ALTER THE AXIS OF A PLANET, THE INCREDIBLE BARRIER CLOSES UPON THE AGONIZED INTRUDER, FORCING HIM BACK, BACK, BACK--

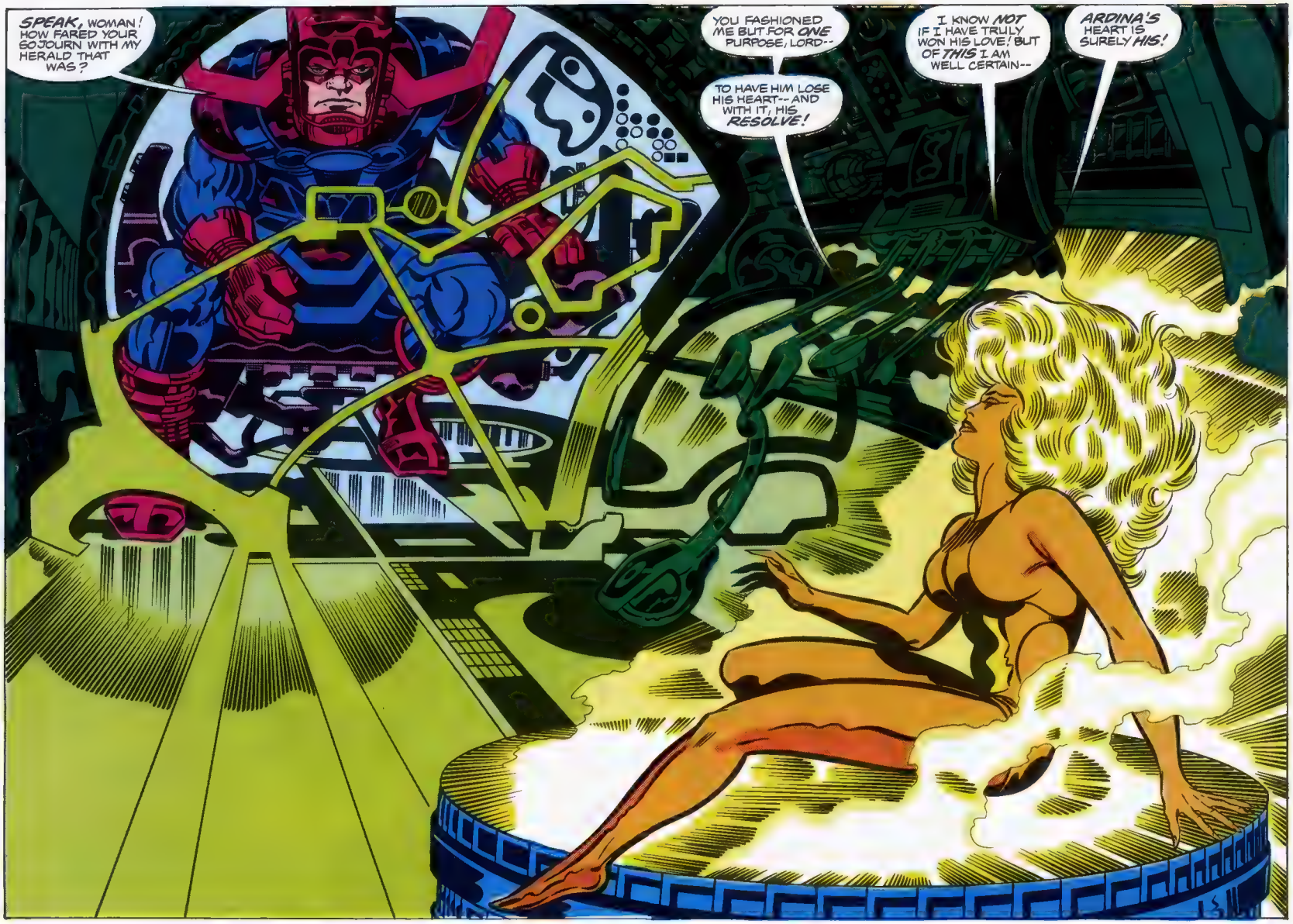
UNTIL...


HE PLUNGES TO THE SURFACE OF EARTH ONCE MORE, STREAKING THROUGH THE EVENING SKIES LIKE A HUMAN METEOR!

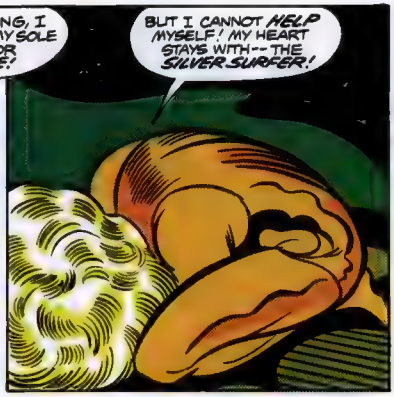

BUT WHAT OF THE GOLDEN, GLOWING ARDINA? SUCH IS THE UNIMAGINABLE POWER OF GALACTUS THAT THE BARRIER STOPS NONE BUT HIS FORMER HERALD!
THUS, ARDINA PASSES THROUGH THE FORCE-FIELD! BUT THEN...

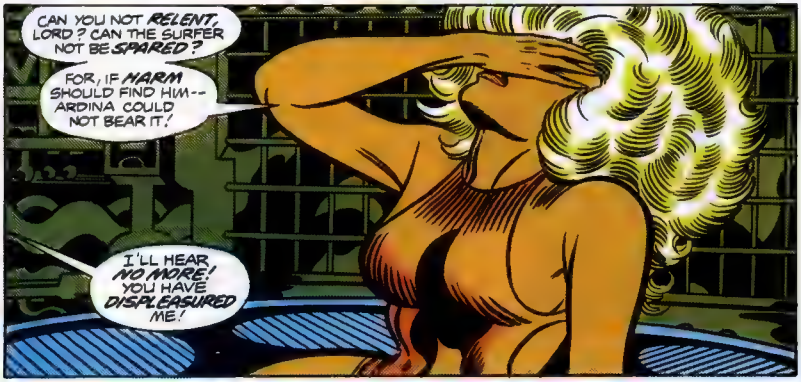
MOVING AT NEARLY THE SPEED OF LIGHT, ONLY A VAPOR TRAIL IS SEEN AS THE MYSTERIOUS FEMALE BLAZES TOWARDS A GIGANTIC SPACE VEHICLE--

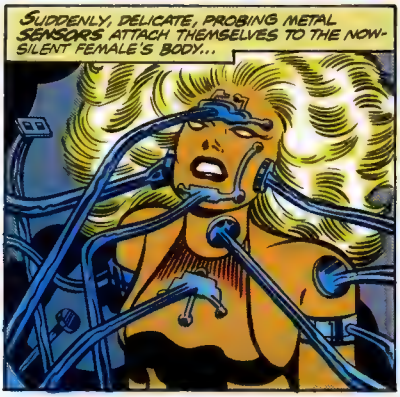

SEATED REGALLY WITHIN, A SILENT FIGURE MENTALLY CONTROLS ARDINA'S PROGRESS, UNTIL...
SHE HAS ARRIVED!

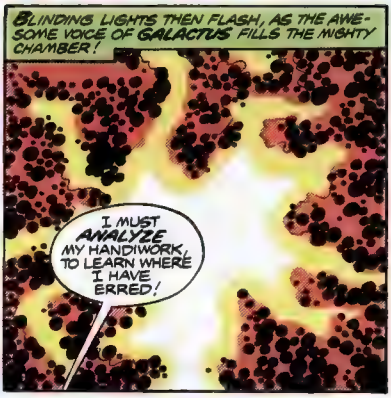

SPEAK, WOMAN! HOW FARED YOUR SOJOURN WITH MY HERALD THAT WAS?
YOU FASHIONED ME BUT FOR ONE PURPOSE, LORD--
TO HAVE HIM LOSE HIS HEART-- AND WITH IT, HIS RESOLVE!
I KNOW NOT IF I HAVE TRULY WON HIS LOVE! BUT OF THIS I AM WELL CERTAIN--
ARDINA'S HEART IS SURELY HIS!

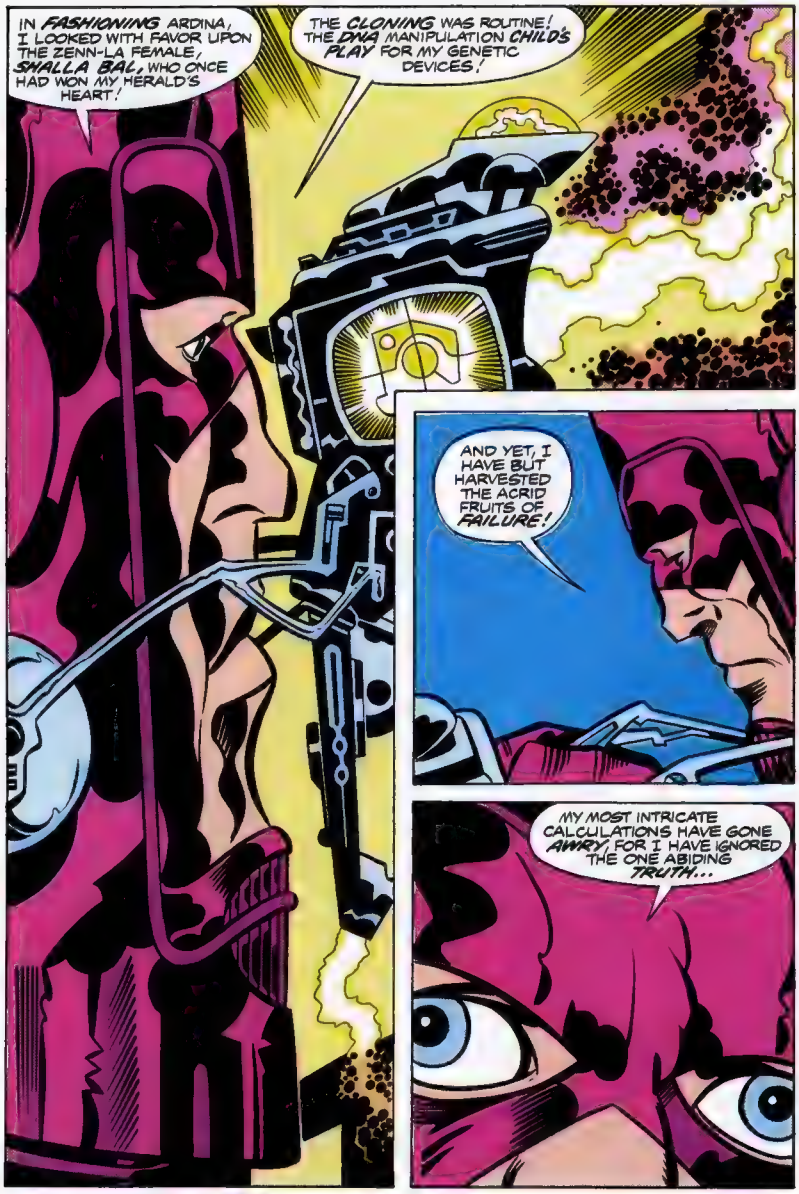
I HAVE FAILED YOU, GREAT GALACTUS!
AND, IN SO DOING, I HAVE FAILED MY SOLE REASON FOR EXISTENCE!

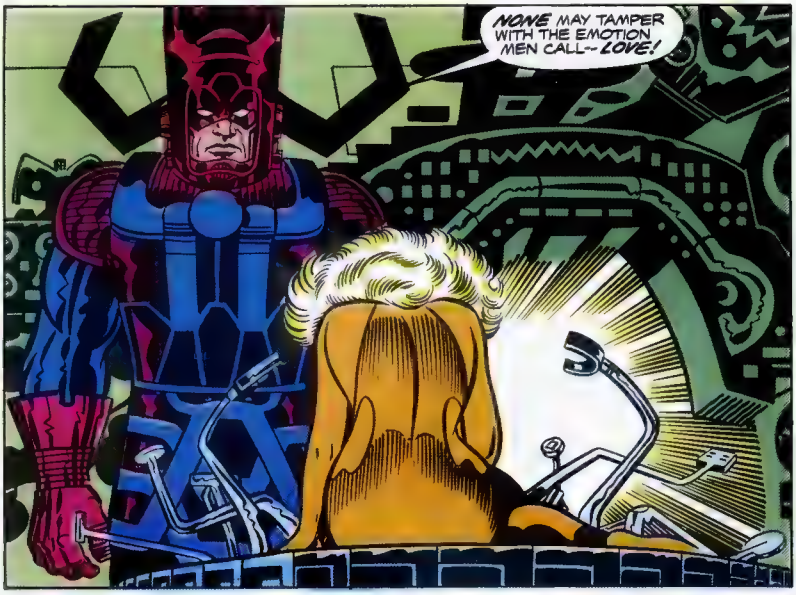

BUT I CANNOT HELP MYSELF! MY HEART STAYS WITH -- THE SILVER SURFER!


CAN YOU NOT RELENT, LORD? CAN THE SURFER NOT BE SPARED?
FOR, IF HARM SHOULD FIND HIM -- ARDINA COULD NOT BEAR IT!
I'LL HEAR NO MORE! YOU HAVE DISPLEASURED ME!


SUDDENLY, DELICATE, PROBING METAL SENSORS ATTACH THEMSELVES TO THE NOW-SILENT FEMALE'S BODY...


BLINDING LIGHTS THEN FLASH, AS THE AWESOME VOICE OF GALACTUS FILLS THE MIGHTY CHAMBER!
I MUST ANALYZE MY HANDIWORK, TO LEARN WHERE I HAVE ERRED!


IN FASHIONING ARDINA, I LOOKED WITH FAVOR UPON THE ZENN-LA FEMALE, SHALLA BAL, WHO ONCE HAD WON MY HERALD'S HEART!
THE CLONING WAS ROUTINE! THE DNA MANIPULATION CHILD'S PLAY FOR MY GENETIC DEVICES!
AND YET, I HAVE BUT HARVESTED THE ACRID FRUITS OF FAILURE!
MY MOST INTRICATE CALCULATIONS HAVE GONE AWRY, FOR I HAVE IGNORED THE ONE ABIDING TRUTH...


NONE MAY TAMPER WITH THE EMOTION MEN CALL--LOVE!

BUT THE GAME HAS STILL NOT RUN ITS COURSE! THE FINAL MOVE HAS NOT BEEN PLAYED!
AND YOU, MY PAWN, SHALL BRING ME TRIUMPH YET!

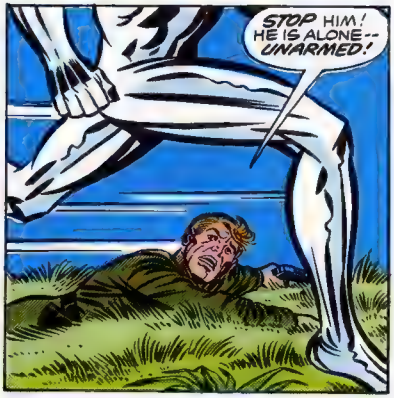
THUS, TO EARTH DO I RETURN YOU--FOR THE FATEFUL FINAL TIME!

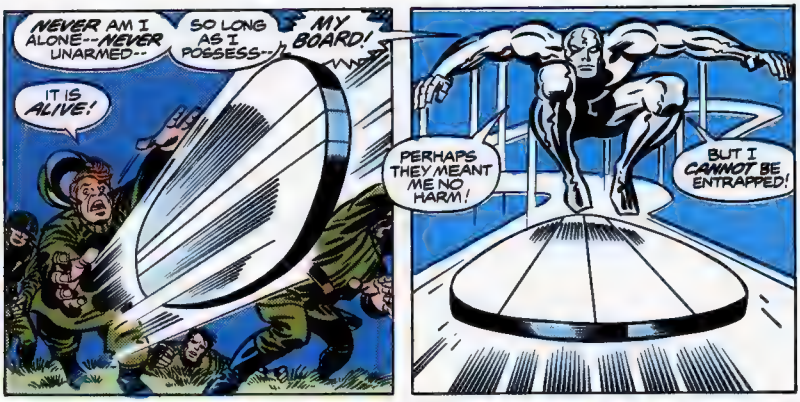
MEANWHILE...
SEE, COMRADE! HE BREATHES! HE IS ALIVE!
YOU! WAKE UP! WAKE UP, I SAY!
A SURFBOARD? SO FAR FROM THE SEA?
IT COULD BE AN IMPERIALIST TRICK, COMRADE COLONEL!

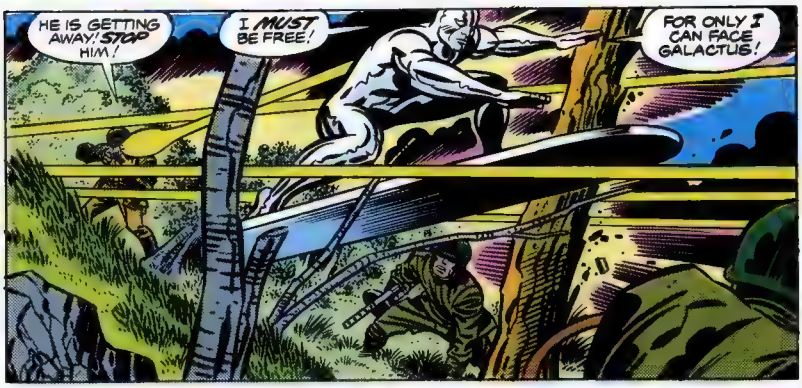
WITH A FACE SO WHITE, PERHAPS HE IS A STRANDED MIME!
WAKE, COMRADE! LET US SPEAK!
WHO--?

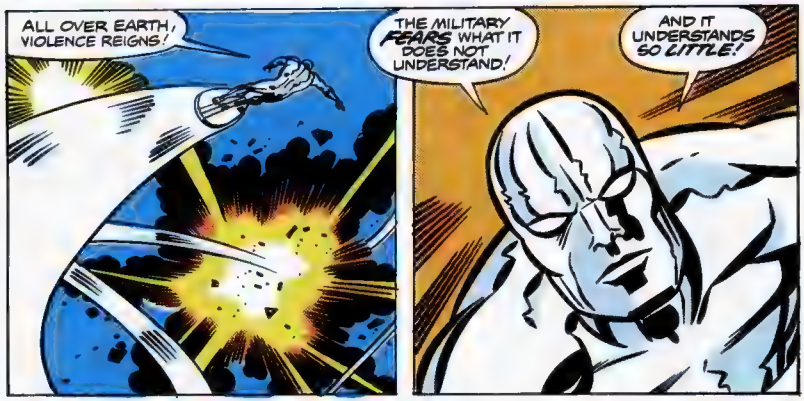
MY BOARD! I MUST HAVE MY BOARD!
IT WILL BE RETURNED-- AFTER WE INSPECT IT!

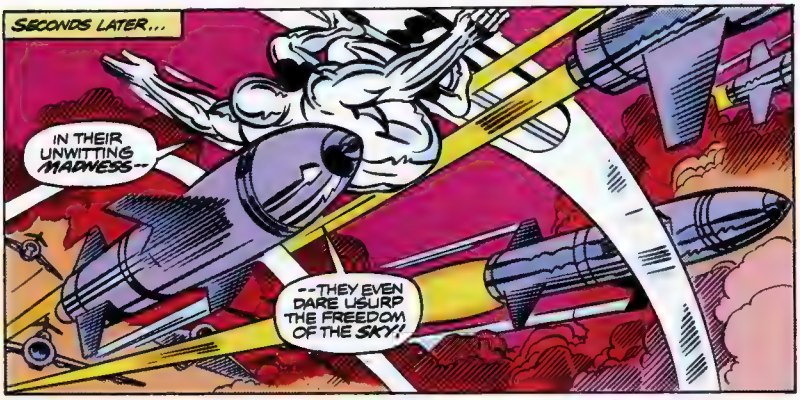
NO!

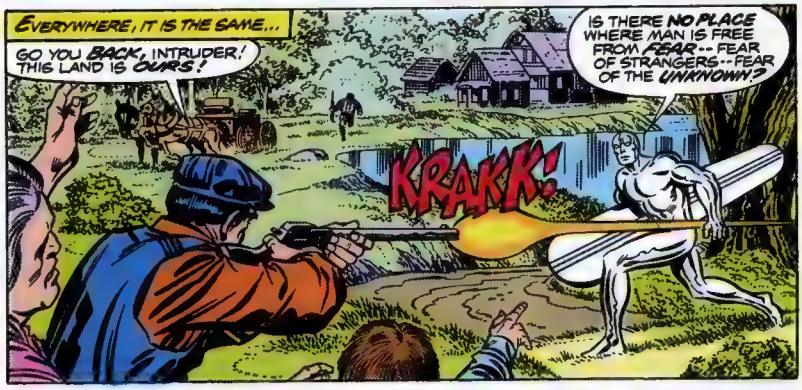

STOP HIM! HE IS ALONE-- UNARMED!


NEVER AM I ALONE--NEVER UNARMED--
SO LONG AS I POSSESS--
MY BOARD!
IT IS ALIVE!
PERHAPS THEY MEANT ME NO HARM!
BUT I CANNOT BE ENTRAPPED!

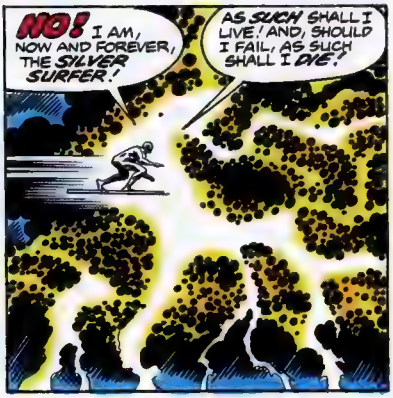

HE IS GETTING AWAY! STOP HIM!
I MUST BE FREE!
FOR ONLY I CAN FACE GALACTUS!

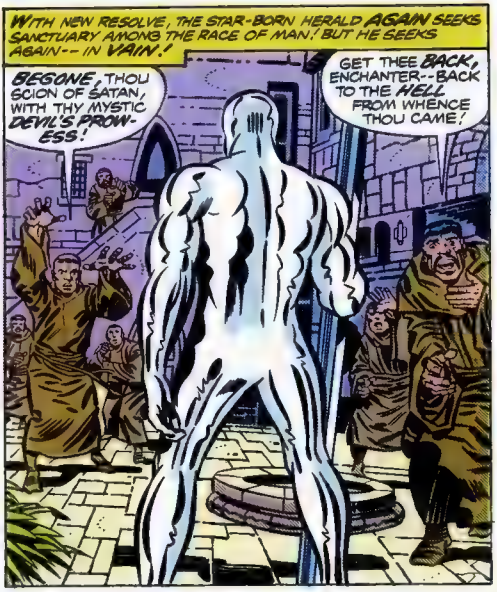

ALL OVER EARTH, VIOLENCE REIGNS!
THE MILITARY FEARS WHAT IT DOES NOT UNDERSTAND!
AND IT UNDERSTANDS SO LITTLE!


SECONDS LATER...
IN THEIR UNWITTING MADNESS--
--THEY EVEN DARE USURP THE FREEDOM OF THE SKY!

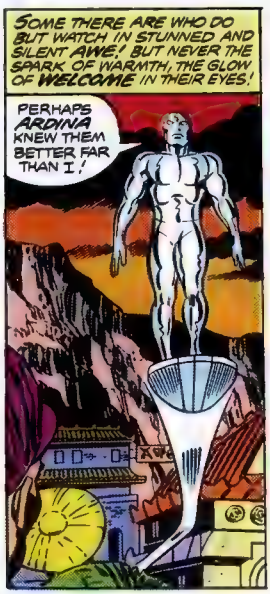

EVERYWHERE, IT IS THE SAME...
GO YOU BACK, INTRUDER! THIS LAND IS OURS!
IS THERE NO PLACE WHERE MAN IS FREE FROM FEAR -- FEAR OF STRANGERS -- FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN?
KRAKK!

MUST I AGAIN EMPLOY DECEPTION?
MUST I AGAIN ASSUME A HUMAN GUISE TO ROAM THE EARTH IN SAFETY?

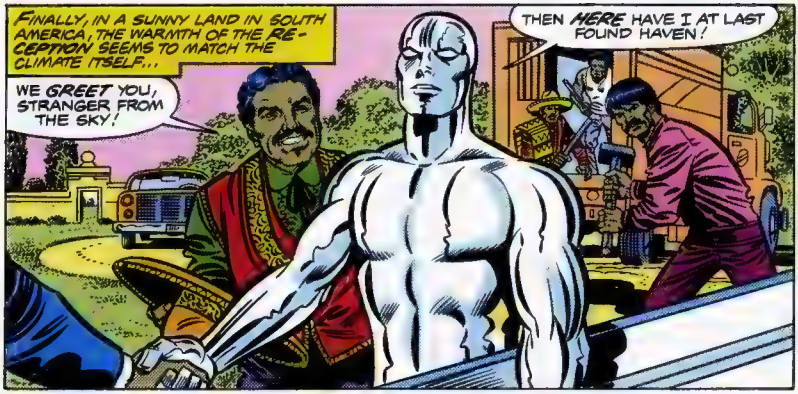

NO! I AM, NOW AND FOREVER, THE SILVER SURFER!
AS SUCH SHALL I LIVE! AND, SHOULD I FAIL, AS SUCH SHALL I DIE!


WITH NEW RESOLVE, THE STAR-BORN HERALD AGAIN SEEKS SANCTUARY AMONG THE RACE OF MAN! BUT HE SEEKS AGAIN-- IN VAIN!
BEGONE, THOU SCION OF SATAN, WITH THY MYSTIC DEVIL'S PROWESS!
GET THEE BACK, ENCHANTER--BACK TO THE HELL FROM WHENCE THOU CAME!

BEHOLD, ONE MAN, EMBARKED ON A LONE ENDEAVOR TO SAVE THE WORLD FROM DOOM! BEHOLD, ONE MAN, REVILED, REJECTED BY THOSE FOR WHOM HE STRIVES-- BY THOSE FOR WHOM HE HAS FORSAKEN THE GLORY OF THE COSMOS!
BY THE BEARD OF THE PROPHET, A MESSENGER OF DEATH!
AVERT YOUR EYES, LEST YE BE CURSED!


SOME THERE ARE WHO DO BUT WATCH IN STUNNED AND SILENT AWE! BUT NEVER THE SPARK OF WARMTH, THE GLOW OF WELCOME IN THEIR EYES!
PERHAPS ARDINA KNEW THEM BETTER FAR THAN I!

EVEN THOSE WHO NOW BUILD ICONS IN HIS IMAGE, GREETED HIM AT FIRST WITH SPEAR AND ARROW-- WITH HATE AND FEAR!
HE PASSED AMONGST THEM ONCE! AND SO IS LEGEND BORN!

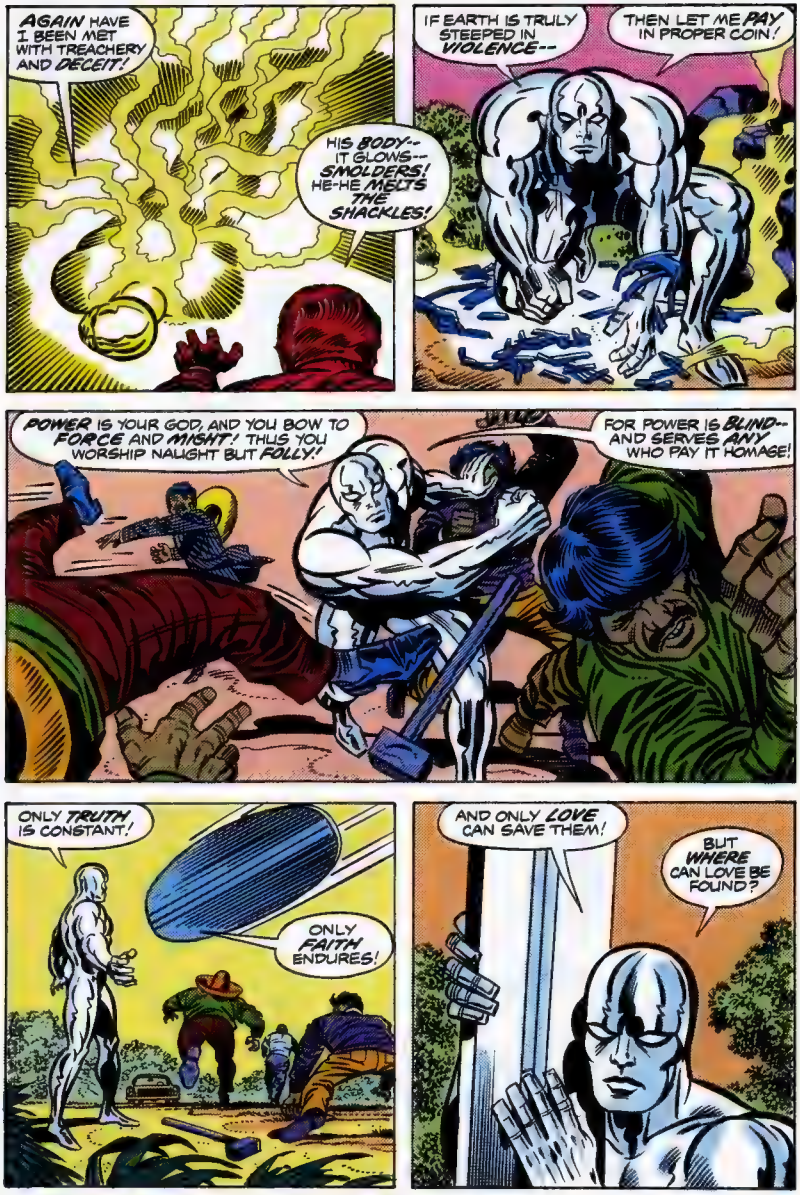

FINALLY, IN A SUNNY LAND IN SOUTH AMERICA, THE WARMTH OF THE RE-CEPTION SEEMS TO MATCH THE CLIMATE ITSELF...
WE GREET YOU, STRANGER FROM THE SKY!
THEN HERE HAVE I AT LAST FOUND HAVEN!

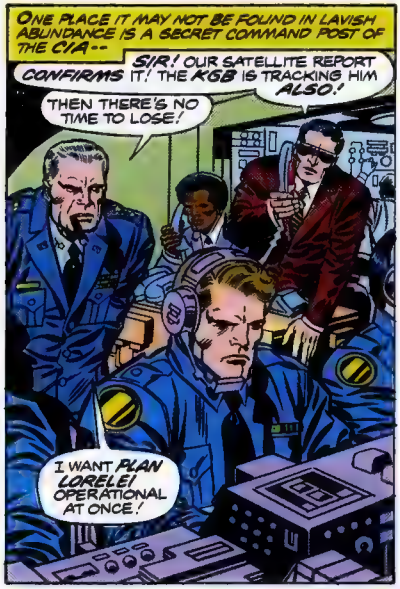
TOO LONG HAVE I JOURNEYED, TOO MUCH ENDURED! BUT NOW WE MUST SPEAK, WE MUST PLAN, FOR THE TIME GROWS DEADLY SHORT IF MAN SHALL SURVIVE!

SI, SEÑOR! THE TIME IS SHORTER THAN YOU THINK!

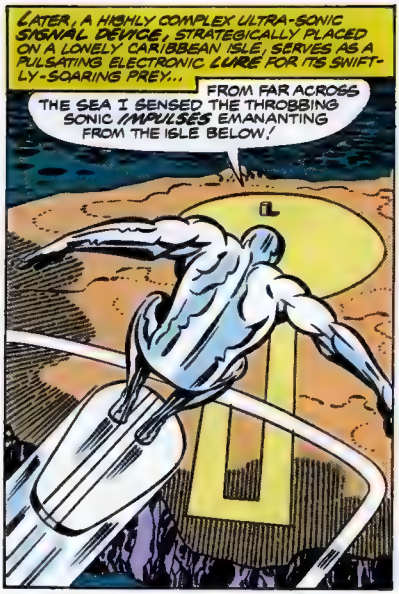
BUENO! HE IS BOUND!

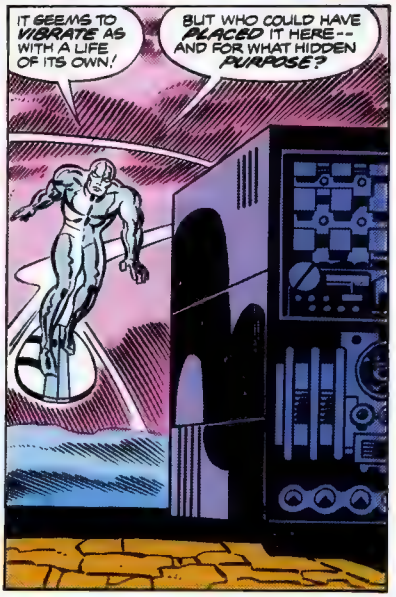
WEALTH AND FAME BEYOND MEASURE WILL BE OURS!
WE HAVE CAPTURED A BEING FROM ANOTHER WORLD!

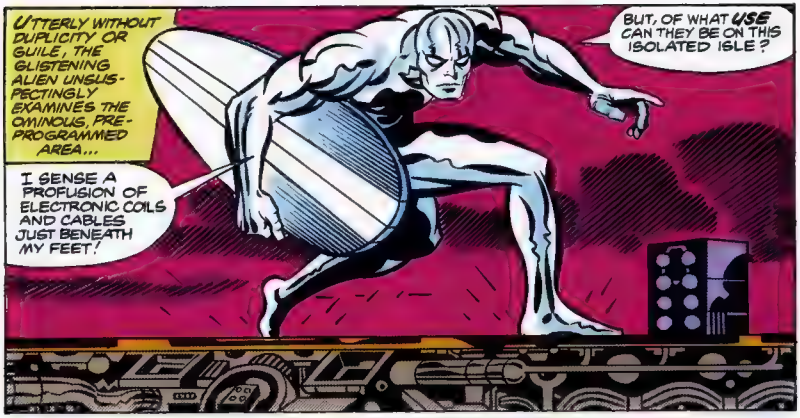

AGAIN HAVE I BEEN MET WITH TREACHERY AND DECEIT!
HIS BODY-- IT GLOWS-- SMOLDERS! HE-HE MELTS THE SHACKLES!
IF EARTH IS TRULY STEEPED IN VIOLENCE--
THEN LET ME PAY IN PROPER COIN!
POWER IS YOUR GOD, AND YOU BOW TO FORCE AND MIGHT! THUS YOU WORSHIP NAUGHT BUT FOLLY!
FOR POWER IS BLIND-- AND SERVES ANY WHO PAY IT HOMAGE!
ONLY TRUTH IS CONSTANT!
ONLY FAITH ENDURES!
AND ONLY LOVE CAN SAVE THEM!
BUT WHERE CAN LOVE BE FOUND?

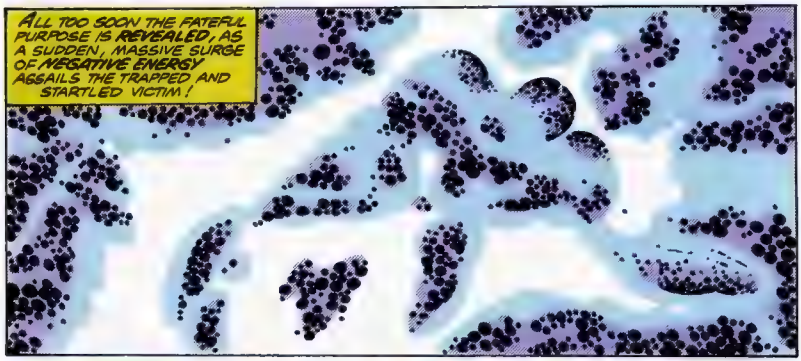

ONE PLACE IT MAY NOT BE FOUND IN LAVISH ABUNDANCE IS A SECRET COMMAND POST OF THE CIA--
SIR! OUR SATELLITE REPORT CONFIRMS IT! THE KGB IS TRACKING HIM ALSO!
THEN THERE'S NO TIME TO LOSE!
I WANT PLAN LORELEI OPERATIONAL AT ONCE!

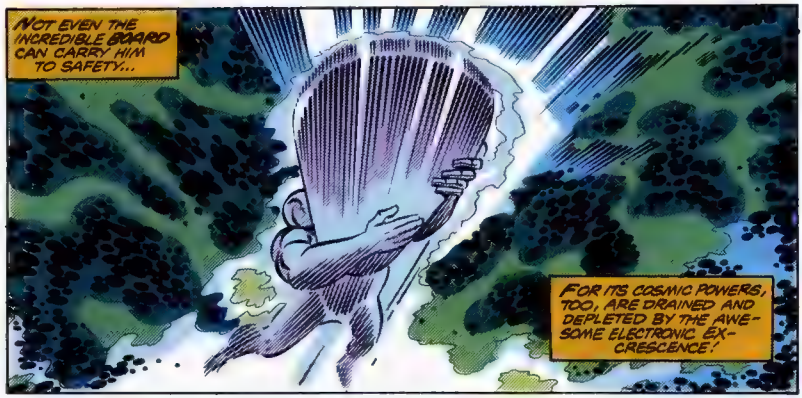
WE MUST CAPTURE THAT HIGH-FLYING ZOMBIE BEFORE THE KGB CAN GRAB HIM!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT HE IS, OR HOW THAT BOARD STAYS ALOFT, BUT NO ONE MUST LEARN HIS SECRET BEFORE WE DO!
IT COULD BE THE GREATEST MILITARY WEAPON EVER KNOWN!

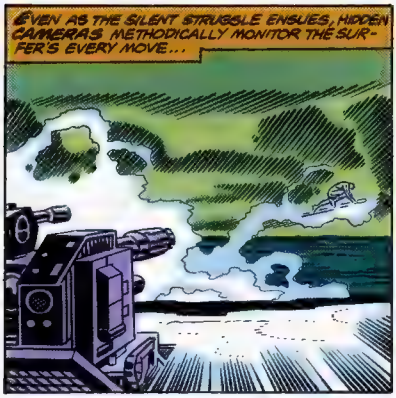

LATER, A HIGHLY COMPLEX ULTRA-SONIC SIGNAL DEVICE, STRATEGICALLY PLACED ON A LONELY CARIBBEAN ISLE, SERVES AS A PULSATING ELECTRONIC LURE FOR ITS SWIFTLY-SOARING PREY...
FROM FAR ACROSS THE SEA I SENSED THE THROBBING SONIC IMPULSES EMANANTING FROM THE ISLE BELOW!

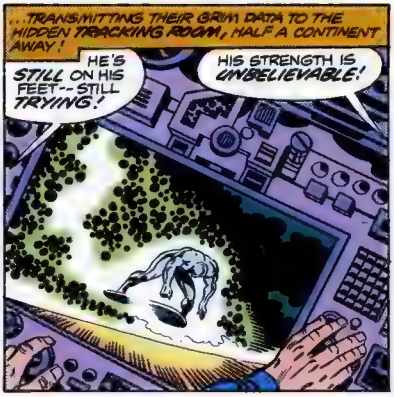

IT SEEMS TO VIBRATE AS WITH A LIFE OF ITS OWN!
BUT WHO COULD HAVE PLACED IT HERE-- AND FOR WHAT HIDDEN PURPOSE?


UTTERLY WITHOUT DUPLICITY OR GUILE, THE GLISTENING ALIEN UNSUSPECTINGLY EXAMINES THE OMINOUS, PRE-PROGRAMMED AREA...
I SENSE A PROFUSION OF ELECTRONIC COILS AND CABLES JUST BENEATH MY FEET!
BUT, OF WHAT USE CAN THEY BE ON THIS ISOLATED ISLE?


ALL TOO SOON THE FATEFUL PURPOSE IS REVEALED, AS A SUDDEN, MASSIVE SURGE OF NEGATIVE ENERGY ASSAILS THE TRAPPED AND STARTLED VICTIM!

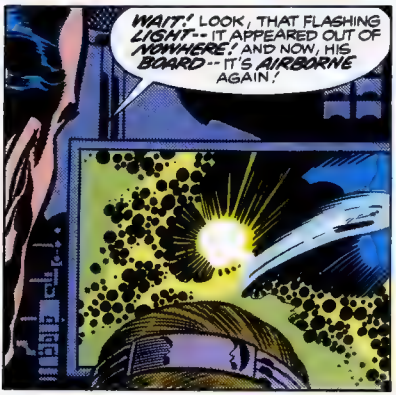

NOT EVEN THE INCREDIBLE BOARD CAN CARRY HIM TO SAFETY...
FOR ITS COSMIC POWERS, TOO, ARE DRAINED AND DEPLETED BY THE AWESOME ELECTRONIC EXCRESCENCE!

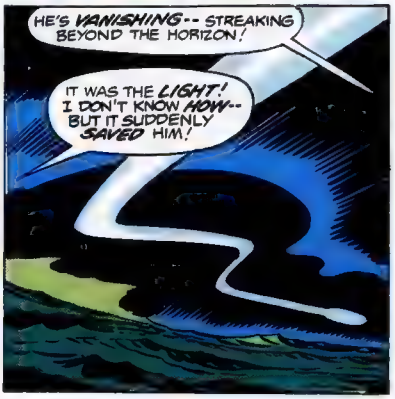

EVEN AS THE SILENT STRUGGLE ENSUES, HIDDEN CAMERAS METHODICALLY MONITOR THE SURFER'S EVERY MOVE...


...TRANSMITTING THEIR GRIM DATA TO THE HIDDEN TRACKING ROOM, HALF A CONTINENT AWAY!
HE'S STILL ON HIS FEET -- STILL TRYING!
HIS STRENGTH IS UNBELIEVABLE!

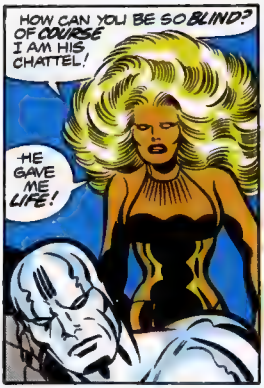
AT WHAT POINT WILL THE CURRENT KILL HIM?
I DON'T KNOW! BUT HE MUSTN'T FALL INTO ENEMY HANDS!

YOU MEAN -- IF WE CAN'T TAKE HIM ALIVE WE'LL DESTROY HIM?
WE'VE NO OTHER OPTIONS!
BUT -- THAT'S MURDER!


WAIT! LOOK, THAT FLASHING LIGHT -- IT APPEARED OUT OF NOWHERE! AND NOW, HIS BOARD -- IT'S AIRBORNE AGAIN!

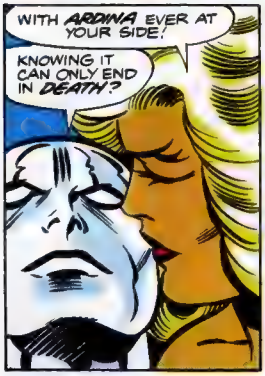

HE'S VANISHING -- STREAKING BEYOND THE HORIZON!
IT WAS THE LIGHT! I DON'T KNOW HOW -- BUT IT SUDDENLY SAVED HIM!

SECONDS LATER, ATOP A LONELY, NARROW FJORD IN NORWAY...
MINE WAS THE FLASHING LIGHT, BELOVED!
ARDINA! IT WAS YOU WHO SAVED ME!
DO NOT SPEAK! YOU MUST HUSBAND YOUR STRENGTH!
THERE IS SO LITTLE TIME!
WHY DO YOU SAY--SO LITTLE TIME?
BECAUSE GALACTUS WILL WAIT--NO LONGER!
HE HAS SENT ME TO YOU WITH A FINAL MESSAGE!
SERVE HIM AGAIN, AND I WILL BE YOURS--FOREVER!
YOU ARE NOT CHATTEL -- TO BE BESTOWED IF GALACTUS SO DECREES IT!

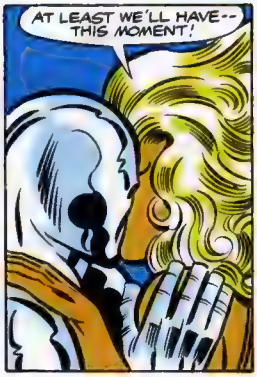

HOW CAN YOU BE SO BLIND? OF COURSE I AM HIS CHATTEL!
HE GAVE ME LIFE!

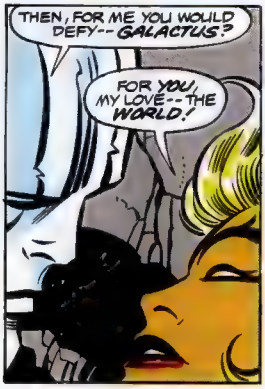
THE VERY LIFE THAT NOW I PLEDGE TO YOU!
YOUR WORDS ARE TRUE! I KNOW IT NOW!

BUT IT CAN NEVER BE! I'LL NOT ABANDON MAN!
THEN FIGHT BELOVED--


WITH ARDINA EVER AT YOUR SIDE!
KNOWING IT CAN ONLY END IN DEATH?

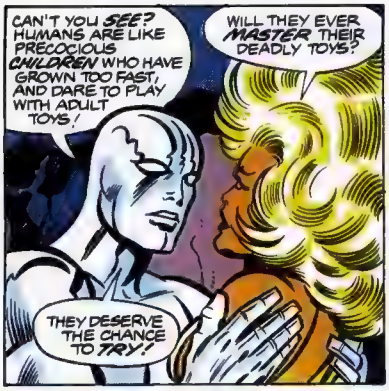
AHH, BUT WE WILL DIE TOGETHER!
LIFELESS WAS I ONCE! SO SHALL I BE AGAIN!


AT LEAST WE'LL HAVE-- THIS MOMENT!

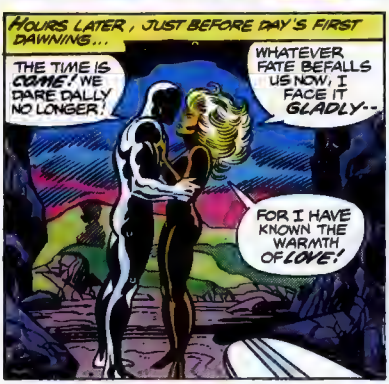

THEN, FOR ME YOU WOULD DEFY-- GALACTUS?
FOR YOU, MY LOVE-- THE WORLD!

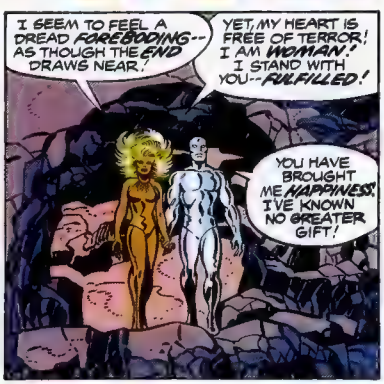
ALL I QUESTION IS-- WHY SUCH SACRIFICE FOR THEM-- FOR THOSE OF SO LITTLE WORTH?
ONE DAY THEY'LL COME OF AGE, ARDINA!

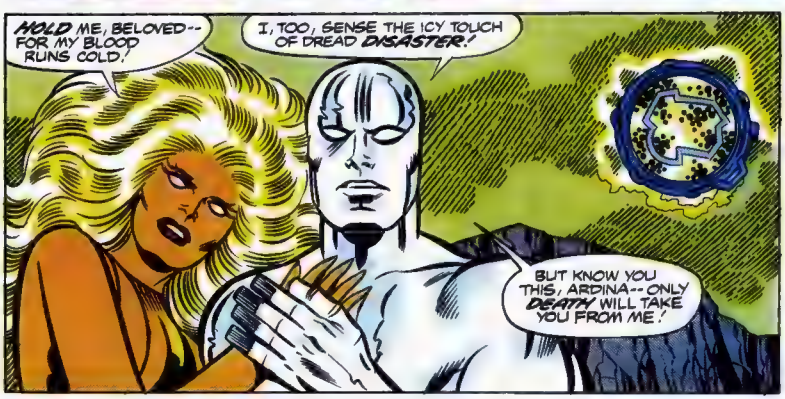
TILL THEN, THE SANE MUST EVER GUIDE THE MAD -- AS THE STRONG MUST AID THE WEAK!

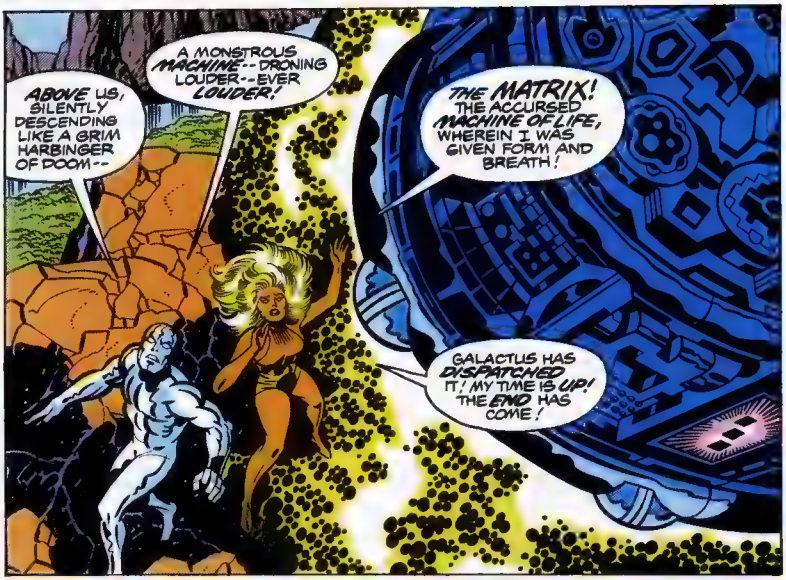

CAN'T YOU SEE? HUMANS ARE LIKE PRECOCIOUS CHILDREN WHO HAVE GROWN TOO FAST, AND DARE TO PLAY WITH ADULT TOYS!
WILL THEY EVER MASTER THEIR DEADLY TOYS?
THEY DESERVE THE CHANCE TO TRY!

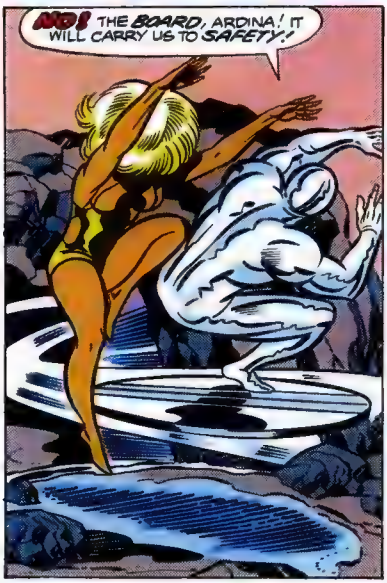
BUT NO MATTER HOW WE FIGHT THEIR FIGHT-- NONE CAN THWART GALACTUS!
SPEAK NO MORE, ARDINA! WE HAVE SO LITTLE TIME!

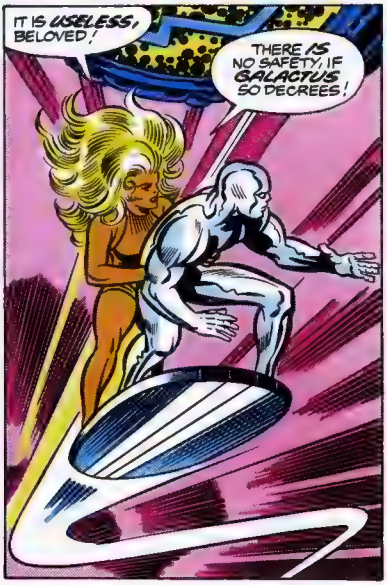

HOURS LATER, JUST BEFORE DAY'S FIRST DAWNING...
THE TIME IS COME! WE DARE DALLY NO LONGER!
WHATEVER FATE BEFALLS US NOW, I FACE IT GLADLY--
FOR I HAVE KNOWN THE WARMTH OF LOVE!

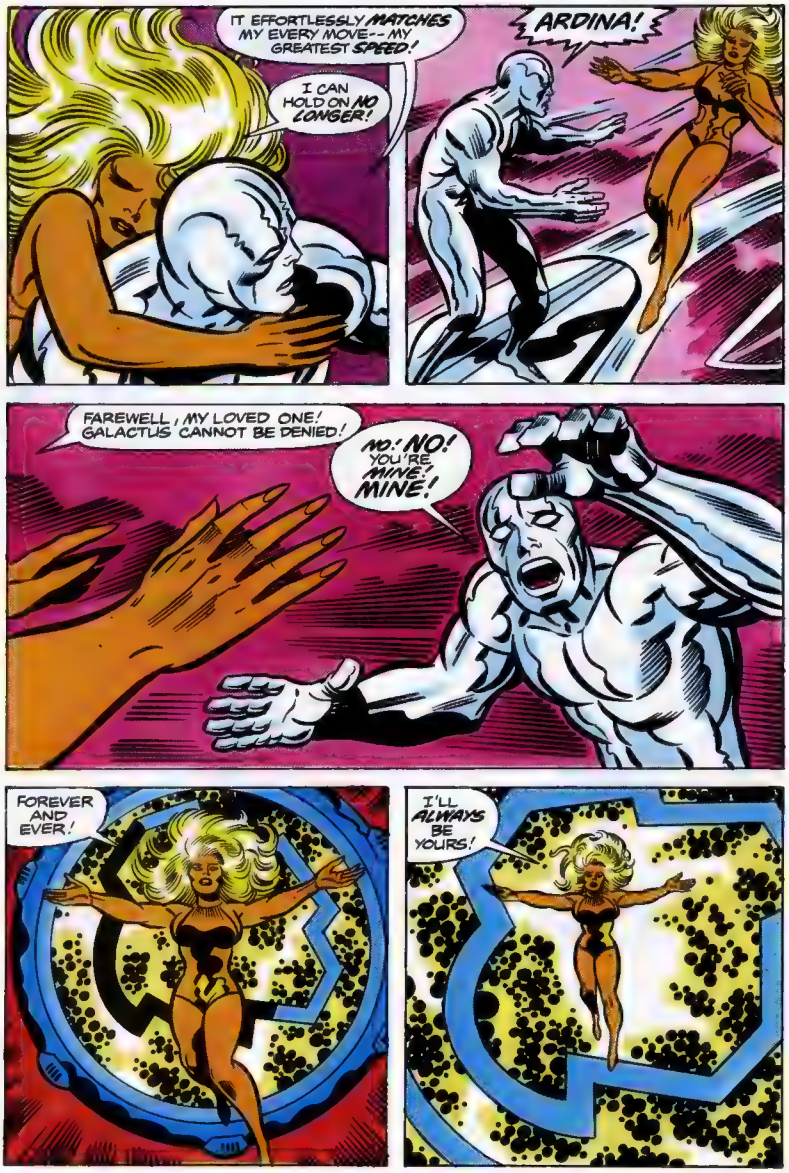

I SEEM TO FEEL A DREAD FOREBODING-- AS THOUGH THE END DRAWS NEAR!
YET, MY HEART IS FREE OF TERROR! I AM WOMAN! I STAND WITH YOU-- FULFILLED!
YOU HAVE BROUGHT ME HAPPINESS! I'VE KNOWN NO GREATER GIFT!


HOLD ME, BELOVED-- FOR MY BLOOD RUNS COLD!
I, TOO, SENSE THE ICY TOUCH OF DREAD DISASTER!
BUT KNOW YOU THIS, ARDINA-- ONLY DEATH WILL TAKE YOU FROM ME!

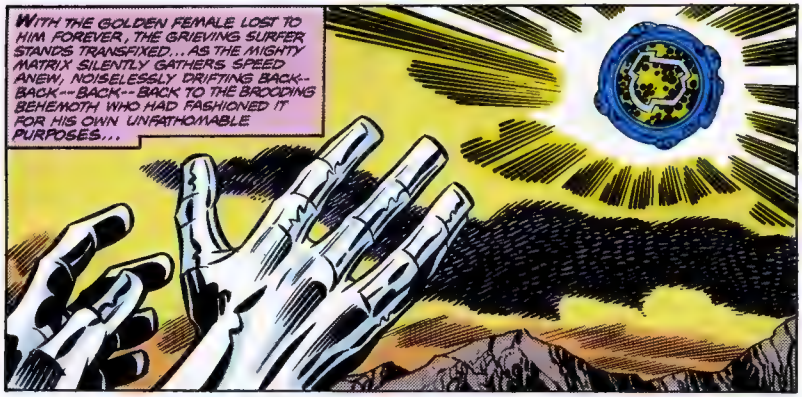

ABOVE US, SILENTLY DESCENDING LIKE A GRIM HARBINGER OF DOOM--
A MONSTROUS MACHINE--DRONING LOUDER--EVER LOUDER!
THE MATRIX! THE ACCURSED MACHINE OF LIFE, WHEREIN I WAS GIVEN FORM AND BREATH!
GALACTUS HAS DISPATCHED IT! MY TIME IS UP! THE END HAS COME!

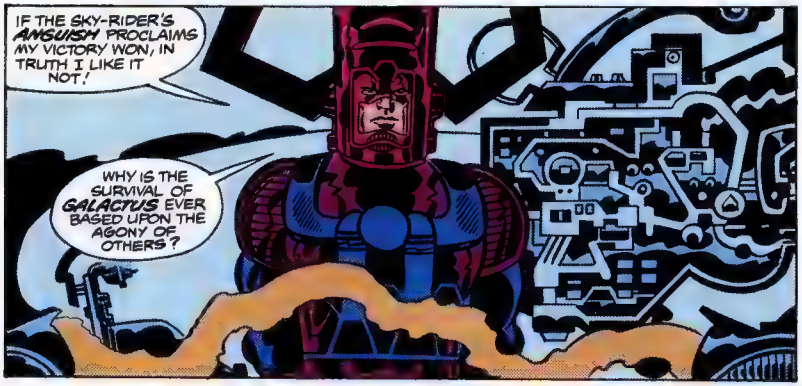

NO! THE BOARD, ARDINA! IT WILL CARRY US TO SAFETY!

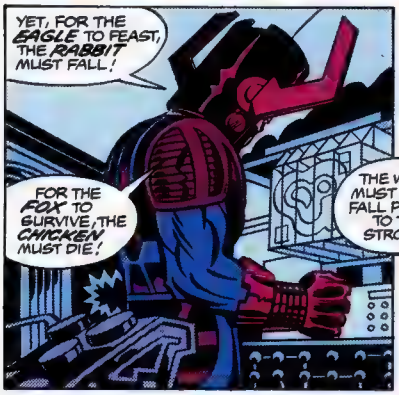

IT IS USELESS, BELOVED!
THERE IS NO SAFETY, IF GALACTUS SO DECREES!


IT EFFORTLESSLY MATCHES MY EVERY MOVE-- MY GREATEST SPEED!
I CAN HOLD ON NO LONGER!
ARDINA!
FAREWELL, MY LOVED ONE! GALACTUS CANNOT BE DENIED!
NO! NO! YOU'RE MINE! MINE!
FOREVER AND EVER!
I'LL ALWAYS BE YOURS!

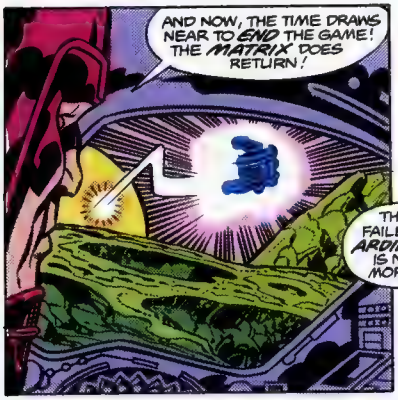
THOUGH I RETURN TO THE NOTHINGNESS FROM WHENCE I CAME--
I'LL EVEN LOVE YOU--AFTER DEATH!
ARDINNNNNA!

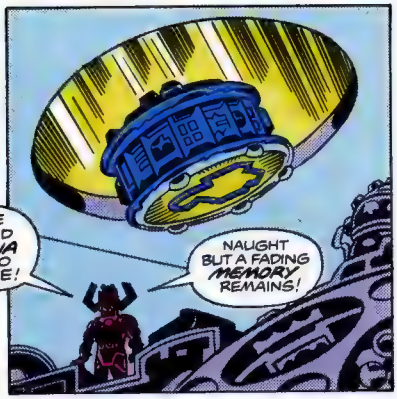

WITH THE GOLDEN FEMALE LOST TO HIM FOREVER, THE GRIEVING SURFER STANDS TRANSFIXED...AS THE MIGHTY MATRIX SILENTLY GATHERS SPEED ANEW, NOISELESSLY DRIFTING BACK--BACK--BACK--BACK TO THE BROODING BEHEMOTH WHO HAD FASHIONED IT FOR HIS OWN UNFATHOMABLE PURPOSES...


IF THE SKY-RIDER'S ANGUISH PROCLAIMS MY VICTORY WON, IN TRUTH I LIKE IT NOT!
WHY IS THE SURVIVAL OF GALACTUS EVER BASED UPON THE AGONY OF OTHERS?


YET, FOR THE EAGLE TO FEAST, THE RABBIT MUST FALL!
FOR THE FOX TO SURVIVE, THE CHICKEN MUST DIE!

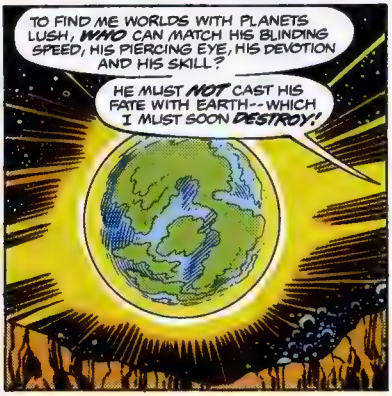
THE WEAK MUST EVER FALL PREY TO THE STRONG!
AND, THOUGH GALACTUS MAY LIKE IT NOT--
GALACTUS IS STRONG! AND GALACTUS MUST LIVE!

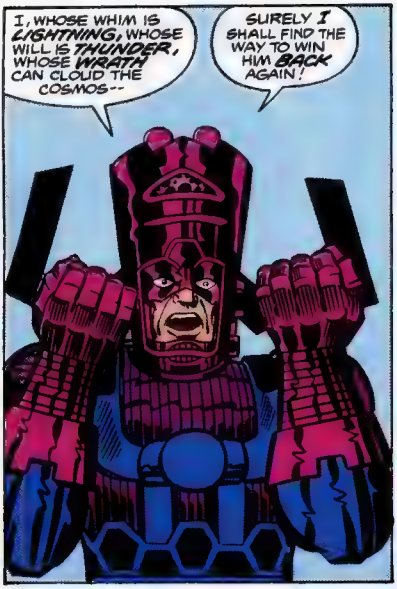

AND NOW, THE TIME DRAWS NEAR TO END THE GAME! THE MATRIX DOES RETURN!

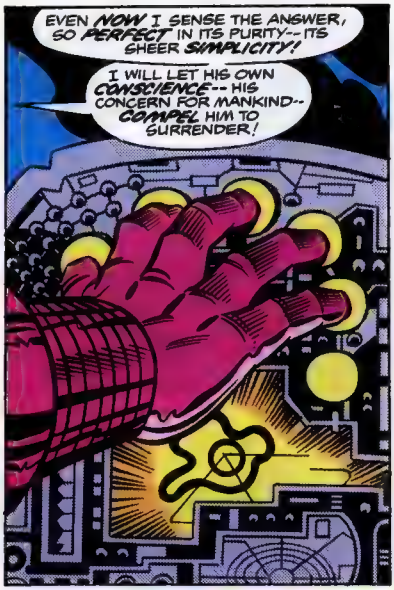

THE FAILED ARDINA IS NO MORE!
NAUGHT BUT A FADING MEMORY REMAINS!

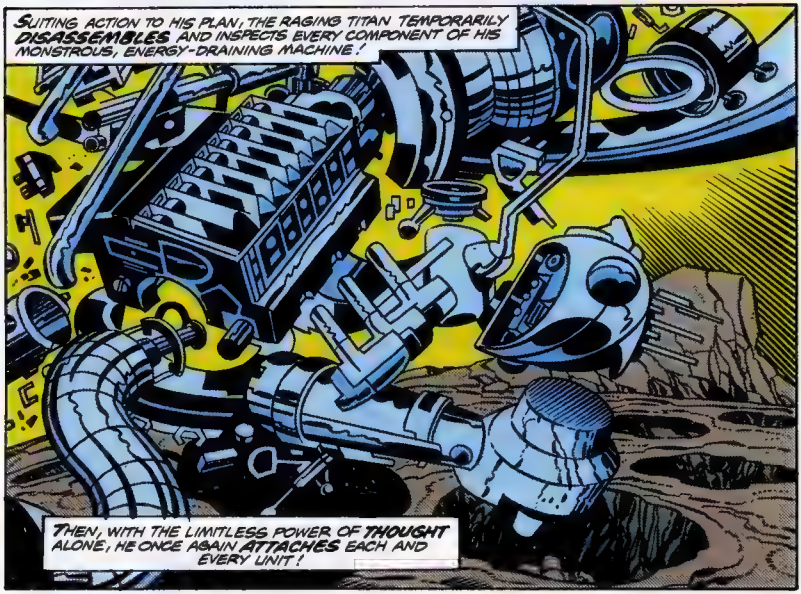
STILL, ONE THOUGHT MUST GIVE ME PAUSE!
NOT EVEN I, WHO AM MASTER OF ALL, WHO AM THE LIVING ESSENCE OF TOTAL TRIUMPH--
NOT EVEN I CAN IMPOSE MY INDOMITABLE WILL UPON THE HEART, THE SOUL, THE EMOTIONAL CORE OF ANOTHER LIVING BEING!

THOUGH THE HAND OF GALACTUS CAN CRUSH THE SILVER SURFER--
NOT ALL MY POWER CAN MAKE HIM YIELD, OR BEND HIM TO MY WILL!
BUT NEVER WAS THERE HERALD SUCH AS HE!


TO FIND ME WORLDS WITH PLANETS LUSH, WHO CAN MATCH HIS BLINDING SPEED, HIS PIERCING EYE, HIS DEVOTION AND HIS SKILL?
HE MUST NOT CAST HIS FATE WITH EARTH--WHICH I MUST SOON DESTROY!


I, WHOSE WHIM IS LIGHTNING, WHOSE WILL IS THUNDER, WHOSE WRATH CAN CLOUD THE COSMOS--
SURELY I SHALL FIND THE WAY TO WIN HIM BACK AGAIN!


EVEN NOW I SENSE THE ANSWER, SO PERFECT IN ITS PURITY-- ITS SHEER SIMPLICITY!
I WILL LET HIS OWN CONSCIENCE-- HIS CONCERN FOR MANKIND-- COMPEL HIM TO SURRENDER!


SUITING ACTION TO HIS PLAN, THE RAGING TITAN TEMPORARILY DISASSEMBLES AND INSPECTS EVERY COMPONENT OF HIS MONSTROUS, ENERGY-DRAINING MACHINE!
THEN, WITH THE LIMITLESS POWER OF THOUGHT ALONE, HE ONCE AGAIN ATTACHES EACH AND EVERY UNIT!

SECONDS LATER, THE MIGHTY MOTHER SHIP HOVERS FATEFULLY IN PLACE...

...EACH OF THE THOUSANDS OF COMPLEX CONTROLS DELICATELY ATTUNED TO ITS MASTER'S EVERY THOUGHT!

THE TIME IS NOW!

NO MATTER WHERE MY QUARRY RESTS, GALACTUS SHALL ESTABLISH CONTACT!

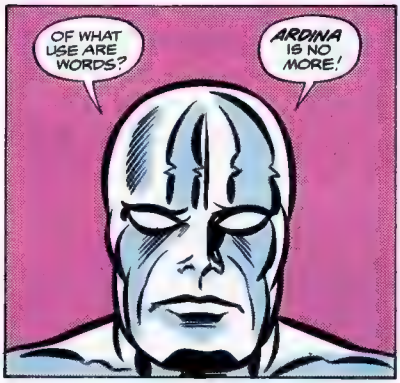
BUT, AS THE SWEEPING MIND-PROBE SCANS THE SURFACE OF EARTH, ANOTHER THOUGHT HAUNTS THE HUGE, TORMENTED FIGURE...

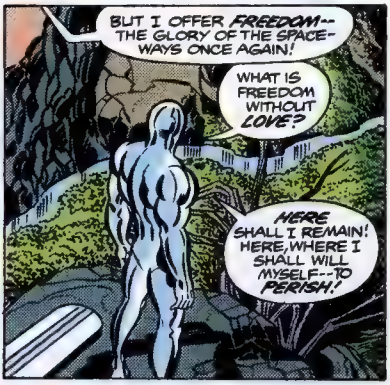
THOUGH I SHALL SURELY WIN, STILL SHALL I BE THE LOSER!

FOR DISHONOR DWELLS IN WHAT I DO, AND SHAME LIES IN MY SCHEMING!

HEAR ME, HERALD! THE BARRIER IS NO MORE! YOUR EXILE NOW IS ENDED!
ALL SPACE IS YOURS TO ROAM AT WILL-- AND SERVE GALACTUS ONCE AGAIN!

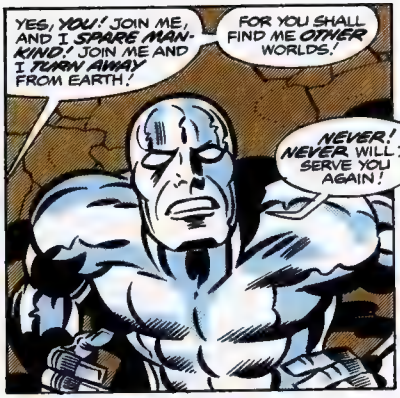
WHY SIT YOU SILENT, HERALD?


OF WHAT USE ARE WORDS?
ARDINA IS NO MORE!


BUT I OFFER FREEDOM-- THE GLORY OF THE SPACE-WAYS ONCE AGAIN!
WHAT IS FREEDOM WITHOUT LOVE?
HERE SHALL I REMAIN! HERE, WHERE I SHALL WILL MYSELF--TO PERISH!

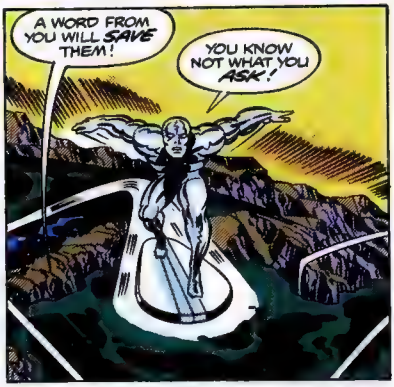
IF IN LIFE I CANNOT HAVE THE FAIR ARDINA--
THEN LET DEATH UNITE US--FOREVER!

BUT THINK! WOULD YOU SACRIFICE THREE BILLION LIVES?
I?!!


YES, YOU! JOIN ME, AND I SPARE MANKIND! JOIN ME AND I TURN AWAY FROM EARTH!
FOR YOU SHALL FIND ME OTHER WORLDS!
NEVER! NEVER WILL I SERVE YOU AGAIN!

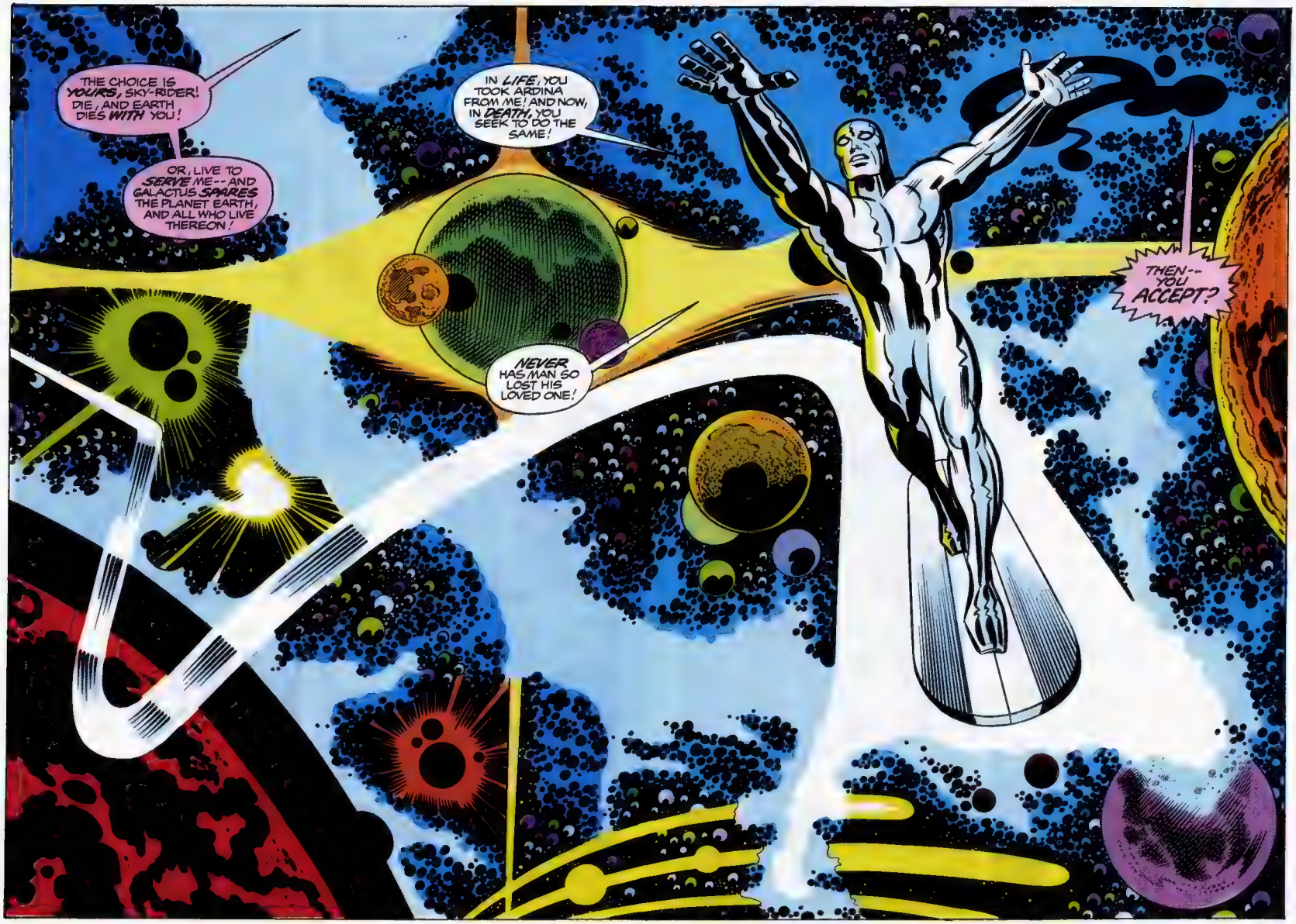
THEN EARTH, NOW DIES!
NO!

YOU ARE BEYOND GOOD--BEYOND EVIL! YOU ARE GALACTUS! YOU ARE LAW UNTO YOURSELF!
BUT YOU CANNOT TAKE THREE BILLION LIVES!

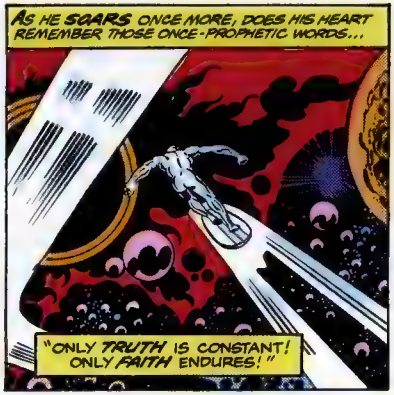

A WORD FROM YOU WILL SAVE THEM!
YOU KNOW NOT WHAT YOU ASK!

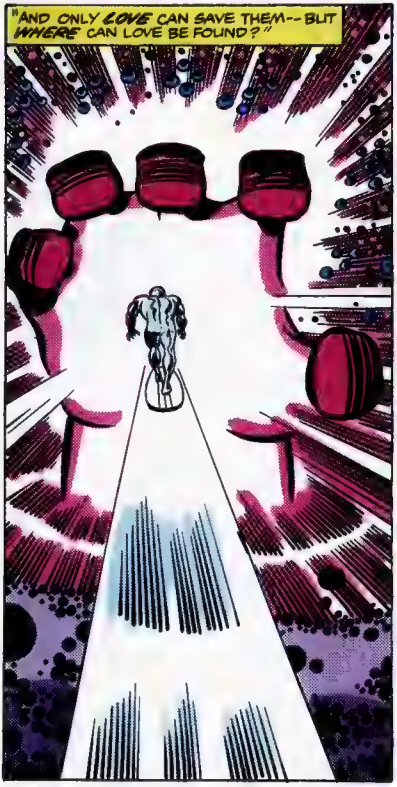
YOU HAVE TAKEN FROM ME SHE WHOM I DID CHERISH MOST!
AND NOW YOU SEEK TO STRIP ME OF THE ULTIMATE ESCAPE!

DEATH ALONE CAN JOIN ME WITH ARDINA ONCE AGAIN!
NOT EVEN YOU CAN ROB ME OF THE FINAL, ENDLESS SLEEP!


THE CHOICE IS YOURS, SKY-RIDER! DIE, AND EARTH DIES WITH YOU!
OR, LIVE TO SERVE ME -- AND GALACTUS SPARES THE PLANET EARTH, AND ALL WHO LIVE THEREON!
IN LIFE, YOU TOOK ARDINA FROM ME! AND NOW, IN DEATH, YOU SEEK TO DO THE SAME!
NEVER HAS MAN SO LOST HIS LOVED ONE!
THEN -- YOU ACCEPT?

SLOWLY TURNS THE GLISTENING SILVER HEAD, FOR ONE LAST LOOK AT EARTH! AND THEN, THE FINAL WORDS...
NEVER WAS THERE A CHOICE!

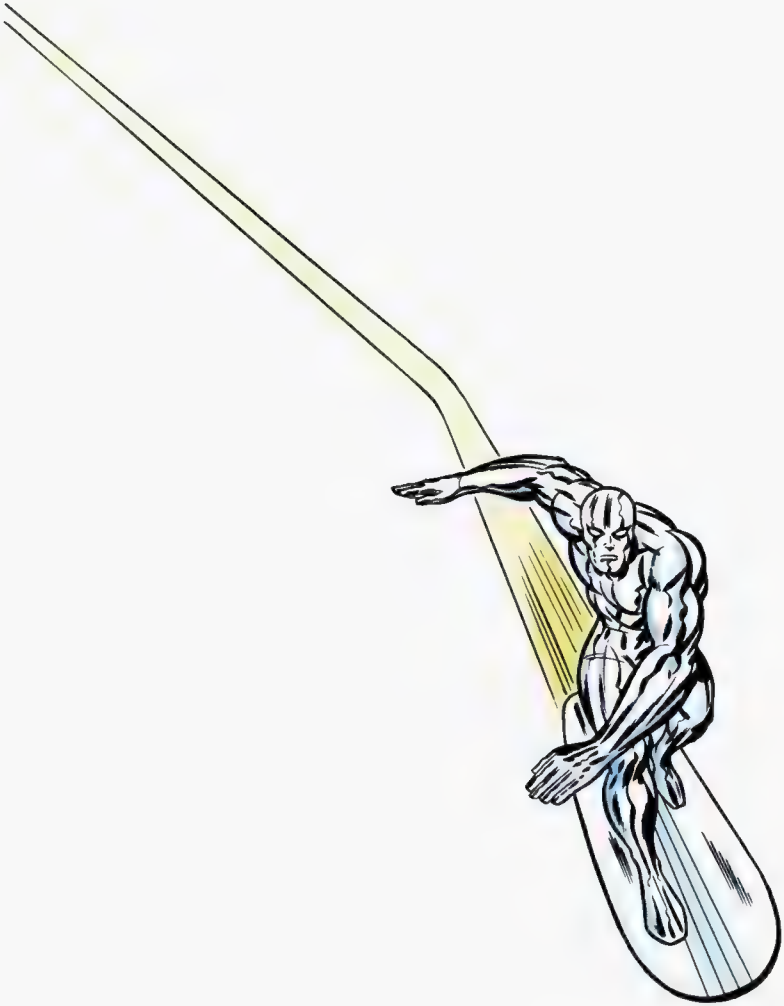

AS HE SOARS ONCE MORE, DOES HIS HEART REMEMBER THOSE ONCE-PROPHETIC WORDS...
"ONLY TRUTH IS CONSTANT! ONLY FAITH ENDURES!"


"AND ONLY LOVE CAN SAVE THEM -- BUT WHERE CAN LOVE BE FOUND?"

FOR ONE SHINING SECOND OF ETERNITY, THE WORLD KNEW SUCH A LOVE!
BUT WHAT A PRICE WAS PAID!

'Tis all a Chequer-board of Nights and Days
Where Destiny with Men for Pieces plays:
Hither and thither moves, and mates, and slays,
And one by one back in the Closet lays.

Tamám Shud



And now, back to the real world...

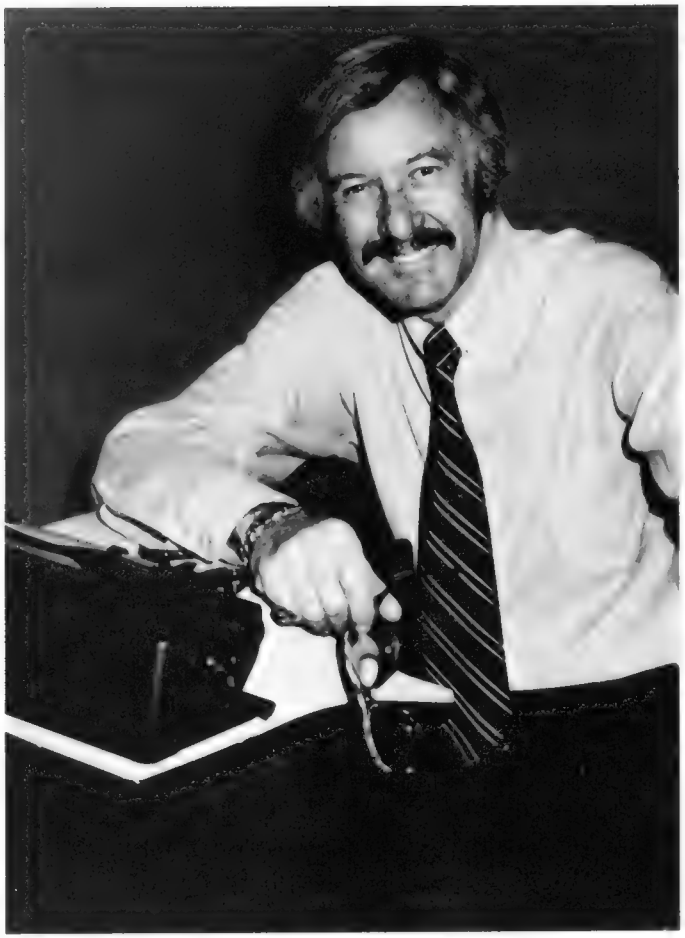
STAN LEE

A native New Yorker, Stan Lee is one of the country's most widely traveled authors. There are few campuses he hasn't visited, lecturing about comics and creative writing.

Credited with sparking a renaissance in the comicbook field via new, relevant characters with humanistic traits, presented in a fresh, highly literate writing style, Lee served as editor, art director, and head writer for more than two decades before being appointed publisher of Marvel Comics in 1972.

Now, having delegated most of Marvel's scripting chores to his talented staff, Stan devotes himself to "spreading the Marvel message" through authoring such best-selling books as *Origins of Marvel Comics,* the syndicated newspaper strip "Spider-Man," and his many lectures. Also, he skillfully spearheads the numerous movie and TV projects based upon Marvel's world-famous characters.

One of today's most prolific and widely acclaimed scripters, Stan Lee, together with dynamic artist/innovators such as Jack Kirby, has created a fabulous new media universe that has become an authentic twentieth-century mythology.



JACK KIRBY

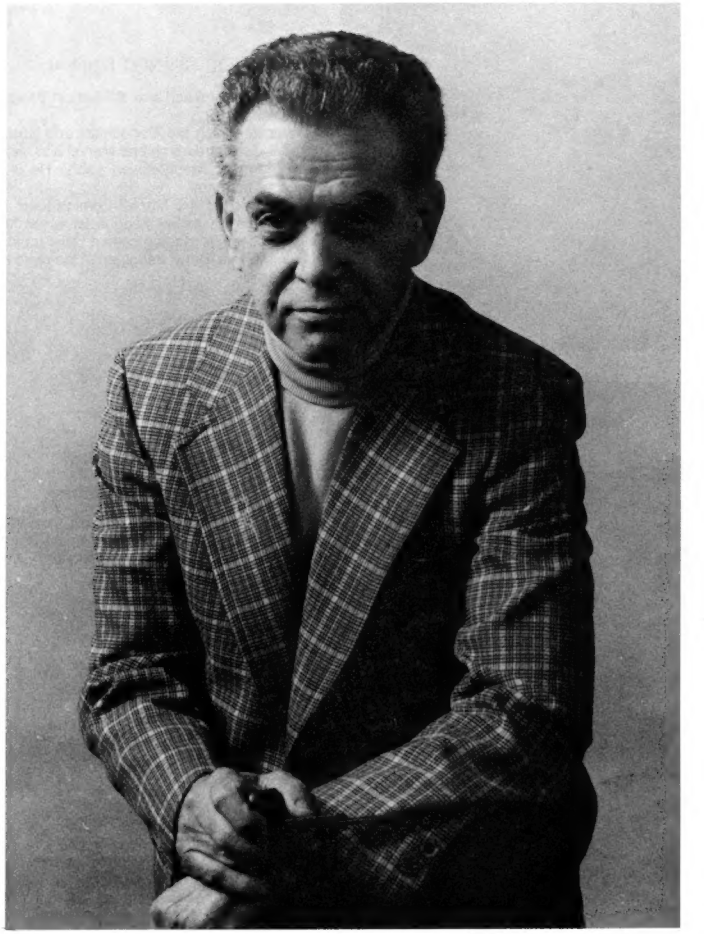
Jack Kirby is a writer/artist whose name has been associated with the best in comics since the superhero industry gained its vigorous impetus.

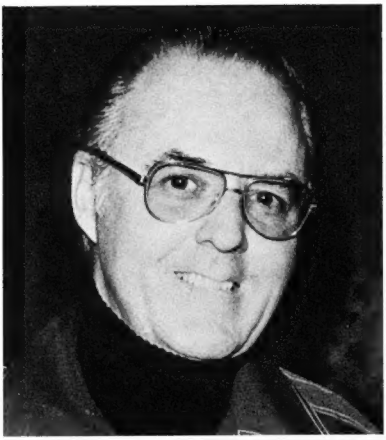
Born on New York City's Lower East Side on August 28, 1917, Kirby's gravitation to writing, art and idea conception was generated in the creative atmosphere of the thirties.

His professional career began in the animation field, moved on to assignments in the area of syndicated comic strips, and took the step forward to what is known today as "Mighty Marvel."

Although Kirby was part of a team effort that produced Captain America and other notable features, his involvement with Marvel's classic initiative of the sixties, sparked by Stan Lee's editorial offensive, brought forth a flow of characters that have achieved international status.

In this dual probe of the Silver Surfer's cosmic soul, one of Marvel's most powerful concepts, Jack Kirby is satisfied that his talents have edged deeply into the realm of meaningful literature and pioneered a quality format for visual reading.





JOE SINNOTT (Inker)

Joe was born, raised and still lives in Saugerties, New York.

After attending the Cartoonists and Illustrators School, Joe joined Stan and Marvel and has been with them for twenty-seven years. He is most proud of that fact.

Joe coaches the Marvel Comics team in the local Youth Basketball League for which his son Mark, sixteen, is starting center. Chief rooters are of course wife, Betty, daughters, Linda and Kathy, and Joe, Jr.

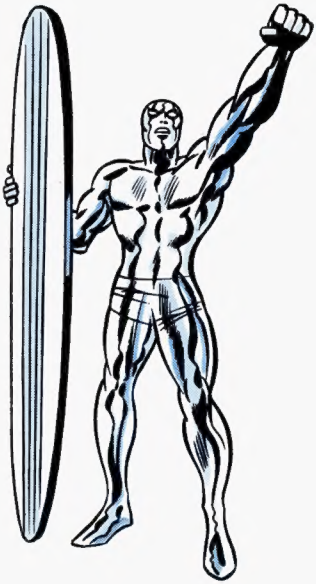
JOHN COSTANZA (Letterer)

John Costanza, born August 14, 1943, began his professional career in comics at the age of twenty-five. His break into the field came after his discharge from the U.S. Air Force, when he assisted Joe Kubert with his syndicated strip, "Tales of the Green Beret." Aside from lettering, John is also an accomplished writer/artist for various comic books.

GLYNIS WEIN (Colorist)

Born in England, Glynis Wein has been coloring for Marvel Comics for the past seven years, her efforts winning her the Academy of Comic Book Arts' coveted *Shazam Award* in 1973, as well as a handful of Marvel's own *Irving Awards*.

She majored in Commercial Art at New York State University, where she met her husband, Len Wein. Soon she found her career firmly enmeshed in the comics scene.



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Front Painting by Earl Norem
from a sketch by Jack Kirby

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